EDUCATION AND THE PHILOSOPHY
OF
SOREN KIERKEGAARD

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem of Effective Moral Knowledge</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kierkegaard and the Philosophy of His Day</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stages on Life's Way</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Self</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and the Development of Spirit</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That Individual – His Freedom and Responsibility</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Self-Realization</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autobiography</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

I

Robert M. Hutchins once said, "Education implies teaching. Teaching implies knowledge. Knowledge is truth. The truth is everywhere the same. Hence education should be everywhere the same."\(^1\) Disregarding the validity of Hutchins' final premise and conclusion, yet the first three statements are significant in that they emphasize the theoretical and indeterminate basis upon which the enterprise of education rests—theoretical and indeterminate because at the very heart of education lies the problem of truth.

All learning with which education is concerned is, of course, not the learning of knowledge, but certainly this constitutes an important aspect of the educational process, and to the degree that it is central, to that degree does the concept of truth assume importance for

determining the characteristics of teaching which will then be called educational.

Much learning that education is and must be concerned with is not the type which has any direct connection with the concept of truth. The acquisition of skills, both physical and mental, are of this order. Learning to operate a power saw, to recite the alphabet, to write, or to read, are learnings but they are not the order of learning to which the concept of truth is relevant. Variances in the meaning of truth or falsity imply nothing for learning of this nature.

On the other hand there is much learning in education that appears to be learning of this order which in fact is indirectly and implicitly concerned with the learning of knowledge which does have a direct relation to a particular concept of truth. The history teacher or the science teacher may maintain that he is merely teaching the facts of his subject to be learned by his students. The meaning of truth is irrelevant for which he is doing, he may maintain.

There is something that can be said for this position. Were the science teacher to teach only the formula of the atom, as that which is in fact used by scientists, and in no way attempt to derive the reality or signification of this formula, he could confine himself to the teaching of facts. But were he to teach the meaning of this formula, he could
not. The meaning of the facts of science—for example, whether there really are atoms—involves us in the problem of what constitutes scientific truth; and it is a problem about which there is not agreement among scientists.

The history teacher is in a similar situation. He could teach historical facts. To teach that these facts are history, however, or that they are in any way representative of any sort of knowledge, is to enter a realm where the problem of truth is very relevant.

Although aspects of the educational process may not be concerned with the concept of knowledge, and hence, with the concept of truth, or may not be perceived by the teacher as being concerned with these concepts, still in the total process of education all acknowledge that they do in fact play some role. No one maintains that education is exclusively concerned with the acquisition of factual information or the learning of specific skills. W. W. Charters' "social functions" approach probably approximated this the closest; but even here the importance of the student's appropriating truths or understandings in relationship to the facts and skills was clearly recognized. And the development of progressive education was clearly a reaction against this conception of education as a process of the students' learning specific and isolated information. It was recognized
that the significance of subject matter resides in the truths that can be derived from the subject matter, truths that help students regulate their lives. And, as in the previous examples, there are probably no history teachers or science teachers who would not hold that the importance of the data of history or of science is that they add up to and elicit on the part of students certain historical and scientific truths. The data themselves are significant only as they add up to something—namely truths, the recognition of which will help students live more appropriately.

In addition to the acquisition of truth, education is concerned with teaching desirable methods for the formation and evaluation of knowledge. Teachers recognize that one of the effects of teaching their subject must be to develop habits, attitudes and skills which are conducive to developing the student's capacity to formulate his own truths. This is an acknowledged goal of all subjects—that they teach students how to think, how to formulate true beliefs of their own.

A particular concept of truth is significant in determining not only what constitutes truth, but also what methods are appropriate to utilize in attaining such truth. This is apparent in the case of Dewey's proposals for educational reform. Dewey advanced a different conception of truth, and hence, different methods were necessary for
the realization of such truth. Hutchins' theory of education, on the other hand, by denying the pragmatic theory of truth, inevitably visualizes different goals and methods as being appropriate for the educational process.

The current attacks and counterattacks within the field of education reflect the conflict involved between the different theories of truth. Much of the conflict of course involves problems which are at least theoretically susceptible to empirical determination. In other aspects, however, one can not help noticing the element of ideological conflict, conflict where the actual meanings of truth and knowledge are at odds.

A further complication involved in the problem of truth is that the term may be used in either an epistemological or an axiological sense. That is, education is the pursuit of both axiological and epistemological knowledge. It must not only pass on to students such knowledge, but must also develop within students the capacity to attain such knowledge on their own, the capacity to formulate both normative and synthetic judgments, to know what is, and what ought to be.

All educational reformers have recognized this. They have concerned themselves not only with the espousal of what constitutes knowledge, but also with what characteristics man must have if he is to attain such knowledge.
A central function of educational activity, then, is the student's acquisition of both reliable knowledge and the characteristics necessary for the attainment of such knowledge. Educational activity, however, to be educational and not merely arbitrary, is conducted in accordance with definite presuppositions concerning the nature of truth. In view of the almost infinite number of responses that have been proposed as to what truth is, however, the educator's task of determining what constitutes reliable knowledge or what characteristics students must have if they are to attain such knowledge appears to be almost impossible. If there were a clear conception of what truth was, then at least the problem would be susceptible to determination. Then, through the combined and cooperative efforts of educators everywhere, through experimentation, and the sharing of the results of this experimentation, we would be capable of progressing more and more toward the realization of our goal. The millenium perhaps would not have arrived, or perhaps would never arrive. We would, at least, know, however, how to approximate it.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. We do not know what truth is. And lacking a knowledge of what truth is, we thereby are left without a clear conception of the educational goals and methods, for these are relative to the particular concept of truth which is presupposed.
We do not know what truth is; and, even worse, it appears we are inherently incapable of knowing it with certainty. The history of philosophy is in large part the history of the many and varied theories of truth, theories as to what constitutes reliable epistemological and axiological knowledge. It appears, however, as if the problem is to remain inherently theoretical, for to develop criteria for evaluating these conflicting theories seems inevitably to result in just another theory.

The educator's task, then, as it concerns knowledge, appears to be inherently hypothetical. He must concern himself with knowledge. But what is he to mean by knowledge? He has only theories, many theories, differing widely in their essential characteristics.

Here the attempt will be to present yet another theory of knowledge for the consideration of the educator—the existentialist's conception. To offer another theory is, perhaps, merely to "muddy the waters." Perhaps we should stop a moment with what we have. We are advised by some that now is the time to secure a consensus on what we shall mean by the term and proceed from there. In view of the complete indeterminacy with which we seem to be faced, such a procedure is tempting.

Indeterminacy is of course painful to the human mind. To know with a certainty is the ideal. And yet, as
Bertrand Russell says, "The value of philosophy is to be sought largely in its very uncertainty."\(^1\) So basic does Russell consider this that "to teach how to live without certainty," he continues, "and yet without being paralyzed by hesitation, is perhaps the chief thing that philosophy, in our age, can still do for those who study it."\(^2\)

The great diversity of theories concerning truth and knowledge is that which on the one hand is responsible for the confusion that exists on the educational scene, and for the bitterness and conflict which often break out between educators with opposing views. On the other hand, however, it is this diversity which constitutes the life blood for the attainment of insight and understanding into this complex problem. It is the presence of the diversity of ideas which permits man to think anew, and, we suppose, to think better. In terms of our present understandings of education at least, this is a valid supposition: that man, when encountering ideas differing from his own, if he has the capacity to comprehend them and to consider them thoughtfully, to take


account of them within his own thought processes, will deepen his own insights and understandings—whatever is meant by these terms.

As Whitehead said, "All points of view, reasonably coherent and in some sense with an application, have something to contribute to understanding of the universe."¹ In this sense, then, existentialism represents a point of view, and as such represents a radical departure from any which has up until now entered the American educational scene. All theories which have had any influence in American education have thought it at least safe to proceed on the assumption that knowledge is approached in a rational, objective manner. Not so with the existentialists. Their basic assumption is: knowledge is subjective.

Perhaps nothing more can be said for existentialism than that it is different. However, although the peculiar nature of the theory is such that it does not afford a blueprint for depicting our educational goals and procedures, it is due to the fact that this philosophy represents a different mode of thought that it opens up possibilities for American education. And it is out of the consideration of these possibilities that perhaps we will be able to think better on where we are going, and how we are to get there.

II

In this presentation of existentialism the purpose will not be to argue for the validity or truth of this conception of knowledge at the expense of other conceptions. The purpose is, rather, to present the existentialist's position and to explore what possible meaning it might have for the educational enterprise. In doing this it will of course be necessary to present the existentialist's reactions to other theories of knowledge, to criticize them as an existentialist would. The purpose, however, will be to give a more accurate and deeper understanding of existentialism, not a refutation of alternative theories.

A further delimiting of the problem at this point will also be helpful. In the subsequent development of the thesis of this paper, the primary concern will be with exploring the meaning and significance of the type of existentialism espoused by Soren Kierkegaard. The term existentialism is used to describe a great variety of different authors and types of writings. It is very possible, however, if not probable, that the term is not used consistently throughout this wide application. This seems to be especially possible when one considers that the term is
used to categorize such men as Tillich and Nietszche, Buber and Sartre, and Dostoevsky and Camus.

The truth-knowledge problem was the central problem of Kierkegaard's existentialism. Knowledge for Kierkegaard, however, always referred to moral-ethical, or, as he would say, subjective knowledge only, and not to the subject's knowledge of an "object" or "event." Kierkegaard himself made this distinction and paid respect to the function of objective knowledge "wherever objective thinking is within its rights."¹

This is not to say, however, that the existentialist's approach to the knowledge problem could not be applied to the problem of objective knowledge. In fact, had Kierkegaard been more sensitive to the problems of epistemology rather than to those of axiology, he would in all likelihood have questioned the adequacy of the "intellect" in this area also.

The position that the subjective processes are the critical factor in both our knowledge of "objects" and in moral-ethical knowledge is taken by Martin Buber in his I and Thou. Here the I-Thou relationship of knowing is applicable not only to the knowledge of values, but to

objects such as trees and stones.\(^1\) Bergson, on the other hand, in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*,\(^2\) and the philosophical position of phenomenology are attempts to show the superiority of the "subjective" in our appropriation of the knowledge of "objects." Certainly these are plausible philosophical alternatives to those philosophies proclaiming the sufficiency of scientific empiricism in the area of objective knowledge; and there is probably as great a need for exploring what significance these theories might have in terms of casting light on those aspects of the educational enterprise which have to do with the appropriation of objective knowledge, as there is in exploring the educational significance of the existentialist's subjective theory applied only to the area of moral-ethical knowledge. The two are, however, essentially different problems. It is possible that the idea of "subjective appropriation" is the determining factor in establishing our knowledge of what we "ought" to do, but is not appropriate in establishing our knowledge of what "is." Or it is possible that it is appropriate in both areas of knowledge. To demonstrate the

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former, however, is not to demonstrate the latter, and to do so would involve a very distinct line of inquiry.

Reference to subjective theories of objective knowledge, such as Bergson's "metaphysical," or the phenomenological theory, may, however, be helpful in attaining an understanding of Kierkegaard's subjective theory of moral-ethical knowledge. It should be kept in mind, however, that these theories are being used mainly as analogies, and when reference is made to them, the contention is neither that the reference is an accurate description of these other theories, nor that they represent an existentialism of Kierkegaard's variety, if indeed an existentialism at all.
THE PROBLEM OF EFFECTIVE MORAL KNOWLEDGE

Education implies both the development of the intellect and the development of moral-ethical qualities. There may of course be no necessary distinction between these, but, if not, at least both concerns are involved. That is, education not only concerns itself with the well-informed, intelligent student, but also with the good student, the student who conducts himself as he ought.

The existentialist notes that today there is a failure to appropriate a knowledge of moral values, a knowledge (whatever the meaning of this term) sufficient to its transference to behavior. On the empirical level, in situ, it appears that the lack of intelligence is not the exclusive cause of this condition. The intellectual bases of ethical principles are recognized and there is an intellectual acceptance of the validity of such principles. The result, however, is not morality. Martin Buber in his essay, "The Education of Character," notes this disparity between "knowing" and "knowing," and the seriousness of it for education. As a teacher, he says, he has frequently tried to explain to his students, and has had them study diligently, the moral principle that "lying destroys life." Buber notes,
then, however, that "something frightful happens: the worst habitual liar of the class produces a brilliant essay on the destructive power of lying."\(^1\)

An example of this disparity between ethical knowledge and morality is expressed in the dilemma of the book, *I'll Cry Tomorrow*, by Lillian Roth. In this autobiographical account by Miss Roth, no one, her friends, lovers, husbands, and least of all her father or mother, was able to treat her morally. There may have been the influence of ethical ignorance, but for the most part it would have to be conceded that these people knew the ethical validity of the ethical principles which they were unable to bring into effect in their relationships with Lillian Roth—ethical principles concerning which each of them could have written a good essay.

There appears to be little doubt of the progress of man to discover, and to discover how he discovers knowledge of the objective world of events. There have been giant strides made in the development of man's intelligence and in the application of this intelligence in acquiring a rational objective knowledge of the environment. The whole history

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of philosophy, and specifically the development from empirical philosophy to modern science and scientific philosophy testifies to this fact.

In the realm of axiology and ethics, however, this is not the case. That people are more moral, or that relationship existing between people today are any more moral than they were one thousand or two thousand years ago is not clear, at least not as clear as is the case of our epistemological progress. In fact, with some there is even the opinion that we have "morally regressed . . . to the level of a sophisticated human animal that justifies by highfalutin ideologies the worst of our actions."¹

Although there appears to be little correlation between intellectual progress and moral progress, in most modern philosophies there is the assumption of the sufficiency of the intellect in achieving this progress, the assumption that the intellect in some manner functions in the determination of the normative, and needs only to be properly developed. This is so well entrenched in modern thought that the term "anti-intellectualism" has become an automatic term of derision, equivalent to accusing a would-be philosopher of "lapsing into solipism." For example, both

Paul Woodring, an advocate of the return to the "traditional," classical philosophy of education, as well as those whom he "attacks," the representatives of the "progressive" philosophy of education, may disagree upon the meaning of the terms intellect and intellectual, but they are at one in supporting the position that it is intellectual virtue which is of exclusive importance in accounting for moral development. Woodring says, "However we define the intellect . . . all choice is intellectual."¹ Alberty goes even further in advocating the development of "the ability and zeal to utilize the method of intelligence² in solving all problems of human concern."³ For him this ability is classified under "The modes of behavior that are characteristic of democratic living at its best," with the inference that behavior not so characterized is clearly undemocratic. In view of the fact that democracy supposedly allows for the freedom of belief, and in view of the fact that in accordance with Alberty's contention a large segment


²In the earlier edition of his book he used the phrase, "the method of intelligence broadly conceived."

of our democratic society would have to be converted, his
latter contention appears to be a bit tenuous.

Today many critics are accusing "progressive education"
of being anti-intellectual. Woodring complains of "the
anti-intellectual drift of our times,"¹ and says that the
"life-adjustment" and "practical" curriculums are to a large
degree responsible for this. Hutchins says that "it is the
anti-intellectual trends in modern education that have pro-
duced that chaos in education which will end in the disinte-
gration of the West."²

In reality, however, this is not a conflict between
intellectualism and anti-intellectualism. For the progres-
sive educator following the pragmatic theory of truth,
intelligence is an adjutivse mechanism, and very definitely
involves the practical activity of learners. The conflict
then is a matter of disagreement on the meaning of intellec-
tual, but on the principle that all choice is intellectual,
as Woodring says, whatever its meaning, there is no
disagreement.

It is this, however, which existentialism categorically
denies: that human intelligence in any sense can be

¹Woodring, op. cit., p. 9.
²Robert M. Hutchins, The Conflict in Education (New York:
sufficiently developed to determine the course of ethical existence. In this sense, existentialism is a true anti-
intellectualism, denying what many would consider to be the major premise of western philosophy—namely, Aristotle's 
premise that man is a rational animal, that rationality is 
the most distinctive thing that can be said about being human. Aiken, stating this conception of philosophy more 
precisely, says that Mill offers us the really basic premise 
of western philosophy which is, in effect, "a tradition to 
end all traditions, which is committed, at bottom, only to 
the principle of reasonableness itself, the principle, that 
is, that a reason may be properly requested for any proposi-
tion whatever, and that no principle is ever exempted from 
critique, so long, at any rate, as the latter is conducted 
honestly and in good faith."¹

If rationality defines man's essence, it is the 
intellectual who approximates this ideal the closest. And 
the group most characterized by the intellectual is in all 
likelihood the professor, at least he ranks high in this 
respect. For the existentialist, however, to be a professor 
is to come about as close to being nothing as is possible.

¹The Age of Ideology, selected, with introduction and 
interpretive commentary by Henry D. Aiken, New York: A 
Mentor Book published by the New American Library, 1956, 
p. 272.
This is Kierkegaard's estimation of the professor:

"A professor's work bears the same relation to the genuine article as tea made with a bit of paper which once lay in a drawer beside another bit of paper which once had been used to wrap a few dried tea leaves from which tea had already been made three times."\(^1\)

It is this, then, that the existentialist denies, that ethics has anything to do with intelligence, rationality, or logic. As Miguel de Unamuno phrases it, "all that is vital is irrational, and all that is rational is anti-vital. . . . The truth is, in all strictness, that reason is the enemy of life . . . a terrible thing is intelligence."\(^2\)

Those philosophies which foresee ethical progress in terms of the development of the rational and intellectual qualities of students are wrong, the existentialist tells us; and it is the assumption of the priority of these potentialities—the rational intellectual potentialities—that has resulted in the ineffectiveness of educational techniques to produce moral students. It is to this point, then, that existentialism directs its criticism of modern education.

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KIERKEGAARD AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF HIS DAY

European philosophy . . . proceeds from the world through the person, who is but an empty relative point, back to the world; it goes from the objects, things, sensations, . . . passing as quickly as possible over the subject, the self, the individual, back to the objects, things, and sensations. . . . Kierkegaard does not follow this age-old development, because he aims at something higher. He wishes to reverse the order and the procedure for both philosophy and thought. He wishes to go from the person over the things to the person, and not from the things over the person to the things. . . .

Kierkegaard's indictment of his age was that "it is the requirement . . . that one must bawl systematically and crow world-historically."2 "On account of our vast increased knowledge men had forgotten what it means to exist, and what inwardness signifies."3 There was for Kierkegaard, however, a vast difference between thought and existence; and, in opposition to the aloofness of Hegel’s system, he held that life is prior to thought—that "all decisiveness . . . inheres in subjectivity," that, in fact, "the subjective acceptance is precisely the decisive factor."4

3 Ibid., p. 216
4 Ibid., p. 115

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Hegelianism was the "accepted mode" of Kierkegaard's day. But those impressed with Hegel's philosophy, Kierkegaard held, "are determined to lose themselves in the totality of things, in world-history, fascinated and deceived by a magic witchery; no one wants to be an individual human being. Hence, perhaps, the many attempts to continue clinging to Hegel, even by men who have reached an insight into the questionable character of his philosophy. It is a fear that if they were to become particular existing human beings, they would vanish tracelessly."1

In order to accomplish his task as an author, then, to bring men back to a realization of "what it means to exist, and what inwardness signifies," Kierkegaard initially set his task as the refutation of Hegel, the refutation of the Hegelian notion of the "cosmic Logos in its motion, in which, driven by an inward necessity, all contradictions are reconciled in a 'higher unity'."2

In order to develop the fullness of Kierkegaard's thought through his objections and alternatives to Hegel's philosophy, it will first be necessary to indicate briefly those aspects of Hegel's philosophy to which he was objecting.

1Ibid., p. 317

2J. Sperna Weiland, Philosophy of Existence and Christianity: Kierkegaard's and Jaspers' Thoughts on Christianity (Essen: Van Gorcum and comp N.V., 1951), p. 21
Whether it does or not, Hegel's philosophy purports to make an absolutely presuppositionless beginning, starting "immediately with the immediate," and producing as the dialectic works itself out its own objects. "The System," then, as we shall see, represents the fruits of the absolute totality of "philosophical science," a "science" in which the most complete historical-philosophical analysis represents the manifestations of the Absolute Idea at that time. The Hegelian philosophy in this sense considers itself not only as a philosophy of the Absolute, but also an Absolute philosophy.\(^1\)

"Pure being is the beginning," Hegel said, a statement which is then explained by: "Now, pure being is pure abstraction." From pure being as pure abstraction, Hegel easily arrived at the presence of "Non-Being," and from these two contradictions he then arrived, first, at the validity of dialectical "Becoming" as the process by which the contradictions were mediated; and, second, the necessity of the Absolute Idea as the abstraction in which the contradictions are subsumed and synthesized.\(^2\)


With the Absolute Idea and the dialectical process established, Hegel then arrives at the antithesis of the Absolute Idea: Nature. These two, Absolute Idea and Nature, are then synthesized as Spirit, Spirit as it unfolds itself in the historical process. History, then, as "the concretion of the Absolute," as the manifestation of the Absolute, is therefore divine, or as Sidney Hook phrases it, it is "the autobiography of God."¹ It is the development of God, and man, through the self-consciousness of Spirit, is able to discover God through the study of history.

That is, man's spirit, as it partakes of Spirit, of Idea and Nature, has both the element of "Absolute Reason" and the element of Nature, a subjective, particular nature. Man's development, then, consists in his overcoming his particular nature, and, through his spiritual nature, his reason, to become Spirit—that is, universal Reason as manifested within his culture, the Volksgeist.

It is the degree of universality that defines the quality of knowledge. Philosophical knowledge is the most universal; hence, it is the highest form of knowledge. The task of philosophy, then, of "philosophical science," is the

construction of "The System" through the dialectical analysis of the historical-philosophical, for "The System" as thus constructed is by definition the revelation of the highest manifestations of the Absolute.

In the first place Kierkegaard denies that Hegel has made an "immediate beginning" with no presuppositions. He finds on the contrary that within Hegel's assumption of "beginning with the beginning" (of beginning with Being and arriving at Non-Being, and from this to derive the validity of Becoming and the existence of the Absolute) that the entire process of abstraction and dialectical analysis has been presupposed all along, and is psychologically prior to the "immediate beginning." Without it there would be no beginning.¹

Hegel's "System," Kierkegaard said, simply postulated "one lunatic postulate."² By showing that movement between contradictions takes place in logic, and then by identifying logic with being, Hegel then concluded that thought and being are fundamentally identical. Thus his notion that "pure thought" developing from this deluded him into


²Ibid., p. 279.
believing that philosophical reasoning can approximate actual being.

The purpose which Kierkegaard had in mind in refuting Hegel was to demonstrate (and not to deny philosophically its possibility) that Hegel in no way had shown that the contradiction between being and thought had been mediated, that the two had been resolved in an over-arching synthesis. Hegel had resolved these, he said, by merely defining them as synonymous "in the beginning."

Verily, we do not need Hegel to inform us that relative contradictions can be mediated, . . . but personality will protest in all eternity the proposition that absolute contradictions can be mediated. . . .it will repeat its immortal dilemma through all eternity: to be or not to be that is the question (Hamlet). ¹

In this respect Kierkegaard agrees with Kant's stress on the disjunction between thought and existence, the phenomenal object and the noumenon. Hegel, Kierkegaard said, had become so alarmed by Kant's scepticism that he had jumped to an arbitrary, stipulated solution. ²

For Kierkegaard, however, "Nothing that comes into


²Ibid., No. 1027
being does so by virtue of a logical ground."¹ Movement is made not by mediating the contradictions, and when the mediate and symbolic are taken to represent being, it is un-truth.

Fichte reflects Kierkegaard's thoughts in his "Vocation of Man." Here Fichte intimates the existential roots of reason itself when he says that it is only because we will view life under the forms of reason that any necessity can be read into it. And when we ascribe "reality" to such a reading, he reminds us, it must be remembered that reality emerged out of the will itself.

The irreconcilability between the truths of existence and the truths of reason on which Kierkegaard insisted is reflected in his statement, "Nothing must be incorporated in a logical system that has any relation to existence, that is not indifferent to existence."² His insistence on this is also the essential meaning of his either/or. There is no synthesis of the two. To cross from one to the other is to "leap," and in either case it is to leap to the "absurd," "by virtue of the absurd."³


²Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, op. cit., p. 100.

This emphasis upon the disjunction between thought and being results in an approach to ethics fundamentally different than the Hegelian approach. "The System," by pretending to be what it is not, induces the individual into a life of reason, and hence, a life of "lies and deception." The individual at this point now "resembles a modern speculative philosopher who found out a new proof for the immortality of the soul, then came into mortal danger and could not produce his proof because he had not his notebooks with him."\(^1\)

Truth, for Kierkegaard, however, is not the object of abstract thought or cognitive experience. It is, rather, revealed through the inner, subjective experiences of the person, derivable from no universal validity. It moves beyond the universe of universal knowledge to become an understanding qualitatively distinct from universality, an understanding within the subjectivity of each and every individual.

Hegel's "fallacy of conversion" was the conversion of the truths of existence into thought. Kierkegaard, on the

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contrary, argued that any definition of man's essence must follow, not precede, an estimation of his existence.\textsuperscript{1} This explains Kierkegaard's opinion of the academic man. He deals with truth once removed, but absolutely removed. And to the degree that he remains academic, to that degree does he remain removed from truth.

In addition Kierkegaard attributed the destruction of his beloved Christianity to Hegel. "It is as if Christianity also had been promulgated as a little system, if not quite as good as the Hegelian, ... it is as if Christ were a professor, and as if the apostles had founded a little scientific society."\textsuperscript{2} "Religion," in this meaning, as Buber notes, "can hide from us as nothing else can the face of God."\textsuperscript{3}

In this sense, Pascal's contention that "The heart has its reasons which reason cannot know," is accepted by Kierkegaard as being \textbf{literally} true. Reason absolutely has

\textsuperscript{1}This is not to say that the "essence" which follows is therefore an estimation of his existence.

\textsuperscript{2}Kierkegaard, \textit{Concluding Unscientific Postscript}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 193.

no connection with such truth, and for Hegel to convert Christianity into this was, therefore, to convert it into un-truth.

What Kierkegaard most strongly objected to in the Hegelian scheme, however, was its negation of the concrete individual. For Hegel, the outer is the inner, and the inner is the outer, the objective-subjective synthesis.¹ It is, however, the objective potentialities of the subject which are reality ("pure thought is pure abstraction."). The synthesis, then, is always the synthesis of the individual objectivity up to the universal objectivity—i.e., the State. The individual, as a particular, is meaningful only as he is subsumed into the abstract totality, a mere example of the universal. Only as he gives up his assumption of individual uniqueness and regards himself as an aspect of the larger social whole does he take on meaning.

For Kierkegaard, however, "'The individual' is the category through which . . . the human race as a whole must pass."² "From becoming an individual no one, no one at all,


is excluded, except he who excludes himself by becoming a crowd.\footnote{Ibid., p. 121.}

We have been looking for meaning in the wrong direction, Kierkegaard tells us. Truth is in the self and not in the system, the system defined either as the logical-empirical constructs of the realist or pragmatist, or the rationalism of the idealist. In this sense, the development of history is dependent only upon the existence of each individual. No universal thought structure such as a state or society, a religion or philosophy, is the controlling fact of history. If this appears to be so, it is because individuals \underline{choose} to let themselves be determined by the institutions they themselves have created. But to choose such existence is to choose to become a ghostly concept—a "useful fiction," or an "as if," as the logical positivist might term it. The self is stopped short of becoming a self and becomes instead a "thing."\footnote{Sartre's, an "in-itself."}

Although Kierkegaard was mainly concerned with the refutation of Hegelianism, his philosophy possesses present importance because essentially it contends not merely against the Hegelian philosophy, which has had its day, but against
a way of thinking which has dominated the history of Western philosophy and which is still prevalent today. His rejection of Hegel, and the statement of the alternative principles which he developed, do not, however, communicate fully a positive understanding of the essential nature of his philosophy, of how he viewed man in his attempts to acquire meaning for his life. The attempt to give a fuller understanding of this philosophy will be by showing Kierkegaard's three "stages" or "spheres" of existence, and his conception of the "self" and its development.
"STAGES ON LIFE'S WAY"¹

Kierkegaard saw the lives of individuals as being represented by three distinct stages of existence—the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. For Kierkegaard there was no such thing as living in or purely by impersonal categories. These stages, then, are meant to represent the actual life stages in which different individuals exist as existing human beings, and through which they must evolve in order to become.

Martin Buber says that Kierkegaard "saw the life of the person entirely in the forms of the Hegelian dialectic as a movement from the aesthetic to the ethical and from there to the religious."² In a certain sense, as far as the language

¹The dramatic sources for the aesthetic stage are two of Kierkegaard's literary essays, "The Seducer's Diary," in Either/Or, I, and "In Vino Veritas," in Stages on Life's Way. The abstract formulations of this stage are derived from Judge William's comments in Either/Or, II, and from Frater Taciturnus' comments in Stages on Life's Way, III.

The sources for the ethical stage are Either/Or, II, and Part II of Stages on Life's Way.

The sources for the religious stage are Stages on Life's Way, Part III, Philosophical Fragments, The Concept of Dread, Fear and Trembling, and The Sickness Unto Death.

In addition, the Unscientific Postscript makes interpretive remarks about the different stages.

of Hegel and Kierkegaard is concerned, this appears to be true. But where Hegel saw the Absolute Reason as that which necessarily instituted the movement toward the realization of itself, Kierkegaard saw that it was subjectivity which was the divine potentiality inhering within man, the realization of which propels him toward self-realization. "All interpretations of existence," then, "rank in accordance with the individual's dialectical apprehension of inwardness."¹ In this way, as Marx did in another way (his "Dialectic of Nature"), Kierkegaard certainly stood Hegel on his head.

In addition to the subjective-objective reversal, involved within Kierkegaard's stages is another significant antithesis to Hegel. When Buber says Kierkegaard saw life "in the form of the Hegelian dialectic as movement," this is, according to what Kierkegaard said, not precisely true. Kierkegaard maintained that there was no necessary "dialectic of movement." For a "dialectic of movement" to be possible, there must be something which mediates between the stages of the movement, something which forms the "bridge" between what is and what is to come into being,

and transforms the former into the latter. Kierkegaard denied that there was any such process of movement as this. The impingement of subjectivity makes the choice of a higher stage possible. It is this choice, however, which constitutes the absolute freedom of the individual. No necessary movement, nor any necessary direction of movement, is then implied by Kierkegaard's "existential dialectic."

The aesthetic stage of existence represents the finite aspects of man's existence, the stage in which reflection is exclusively outward. This is the man of immediacy. "The sensuous nature and the psycho-sensuous completely dominate him."¹ He exists only for the moment, or, as a thinker, merely as an abstract thinker in which he himself does not participate.

In Kierkegaard's essay "In Vino Veritas," the Ladies' Tailor says that woman's category is fashion.² This illustrates the immediacy of aesthetic reflection. The aesthete lives dominated by the immediate meaning of the moment, meaning unqualified by reflection.


The Ladies' Tailor may have over-stated his case but probably he did not exaggerate excessively. Existing people fit this category. Their lives are defined in terms of meanings derived from immediate experiences of likes and dislikes, experiences in which reflective analysis has played no part. The "fashion plate" in many cases actually thinks that to be fashionable is to be something. To be non-fashionable is to be a "square" or a "hick." He is something because he is not these. His meaning is fashion. And that his meaning is fashion can be detected by observing him. When he is in fashion, he is something. When he is in fashion, he can walk in the company of any man, deferring to no one. When he is in fashion he has an air about him of complete self-confidence; he is as good as any man. In fact, when he is in full fashion, he then attains a slight superiority over those not so fashionable. His meaning is fashion, but it is not meaning that has been derived from his reflection upon this meaning as meaning. That is, he himself has not established this meaning.

In the same essay, which depicts a banquet in which all participants must deliver an oration, Johannes the Seducer develops in his speech the notion that woman is only the moment.¹ "This is in its generality," according to

¹Ibid., pp. 81-88.
Kierkegaard, "the essential aesthetic principle, namely, that the moment is everything."¹ The enjoyment of the moment is what is important, and as a life view the command is: "enjoy thyself." "But he who says that he wants to enjoy life always posits a condition which either lies outside the individual or is in the individual in such a way that it is not posited by the individual himself."²

Don Juan is the personification of aesthetic existence defined as the immediacy of enjoyment.³ His life is lived only in terms of the pursuit of the immediate pleasures (1001!) of the moment, qualified in no sense by the inward reflection as to the propriety of his actions.

Oscar Wilde in The Picture of Dorian Gray, even more vividly depicts the life of aesthetic existence. The individual is governed entirely by the pleasures of the moment, in no way qualified by reflective moralizing. In fact, he dare not reflect, for reflection threatens the

¹Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 265.
³Ibid., I, pp. 37ff.
existence of aesthetic life, leading ultimately to its destruction.

"With infinite fantasy the 'aesthete' is in search of the interesting, he is wandering and roving through life, without fidelity or responsibility... The aesthete is afraid of one thing: that he will drift into a situation with which he cannot cope, and in which he will lose his 'freedom.' He fears that his life will become 'historic.' That would be the end of his fickle playing with the situation. His freedom is to be able to play with all, to be an actor, and to enjoy this play like the rope-dancer on the rope of possibility he himself has stretched. He will seduce a girl—that is interesting: he will not marry her, for that would be the end of his gypsy-life and his 'freedom.'... The secret is to seize the opportunity... to pick the days like flowers and to leave the mutilated flowers to the 'moralist.' But the end of all this is at first weariness and tiresomeness, then aversion, and ennui, and at last the despair... of what Kierkegaard calls the 'daemonia of closeness.' In this despair is the possibility of the 'transition' from the aesthetical to the ethical 'stage.'\^1

Through the impingement of subjective reflection, then, there develops the "daemonia of closeness." The aesthete's life is defined as pleasure, but pleasure has left him melancholy and brooding. A weariness and boredom with the pursuit of the "infinitely interesting" sets in, and there is a demand to be released from the meaningless of this stage of existence.

It is the doubt which reflection brings that constitutes the first appearance of inward reflection, and provides the impetus for the transcendence to the ethical stage of existence. The doubt, however, is not a thought category, but indicates the qualitative transformation (reversal) of such doubt, into \textit{Verzweifelung}: a doubt in which the whole personality participates with the highest degree of concern. Doubt thus qualified is termed by Kierkegaard despair and in this sense constitutes "the true point of departure for finding the absolute."\textsuperscript{1}

A poetic example of inward self-reflection is given

\textsuperscript{1}Kierkegaard, \textit{Either/Or}, II, 79.
by Johannes de silentio in a reconstruction of the legend
of Agnes and The Merman:

The merman was a seducer. He had called to
Agnes, had by his smooth speech enticed from her
the hidden sentiments. . . . The merman has
lifted her up in his arms, Agnes twines about
his neck, with her whole soul she trustingly
abandons herself to the stronger one; he already
stands upon the brink, he leans over the sea,
about to plunge into it with his prey—then Agnes
looks at him once more, not timidly, not doubting-
ly, not proud of her good fortune, not intoxicated
by pleasure, but with absolute faith in him, with
absolute humility. . . . By this look she entrusts
to him with absolute confidence her whole fate.
And, behold, the sea roars no more, its voice is
mute. . . . The merman leads her back again, he
explains to her that he only wanted to show her
how beautiful the sea is when it is calm, and
Agnes believes him. . . . He is able to seduce
Agnes, he is able to seduce a hundred Agneses, he
is able to infatuate every girl—but Agnes has
conquered, and the merman has lost her. . . .

The aesthete by being related to society is related
to a "social-cultural consciousness" in an aesthetic-
ethical relationship. That is, the social-cultural acts as
the impingement of conscience upon him. As doubt is trans-
formed into despair, the "moment" of this reversal is the
impingement of the ethical into the consciousness of the
aesthete. He dreads this predicament. This awareness con-
stitutes an absolute paradox for him. It implies the
meaninglessness and destruction of his whole present and

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1Soren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, trans. Walter
Lowrie (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1954),
pp. 103-104.
past existence; and yet it holds a normative fascination for him that he cannot ignore. Perhaps he will escape back into the security of his aesthetic existence, desperately attending to the aesthetic with an intensity that in many cases approaches madness. He dare not reflect, for in his condition the slightest traffic with reflection is to throw him back into the paradox of dread.

This is a Dorian Grey who will do anything to avoid such "moments."

According to Judge William, the ethicist of Either/Or, despair not only leads to the perdition of the aesthetic life, it is its only remedy.¹ And when a man chooses out of despair, "he chooses not in his immediacy, not as a fortuitous individual, but he chooses himself in his eternal validity."²

This choice is not a mediated choice, however. It is a choice between the absolute paradoxicalness of the either/or, a choice which is accomplished only by a leap. "A personality whose life is in one sphere cannot by a mere process of reflection transport himself into the other; for this a passionate resolution of the will is necessary."³

¹Kierkegaard, Either/Or, II, 175.

²Ibid., p. 177.

The despair of the aesthete, then, is the necessity that prepares for ethical existence.

The ethical stage. The ideal of the ethical stage of existence is presented in Either/Or, II, and in Stages on Life's Way by Judge William, the pseudonymous representative of the ethical. In this work the Judge tries to show the "young man," the aesthete, how the ethical supplies what is lacking in aesthetic existence and also redeems all within it that is of positive worth.

The despair which issues out of aesthetic existence creates the impetus within personality for the location of that which will give meaning. The either/or of the individual at this point then is the choice by which he chooses himself out of the aesthetic world of immediacy, and chooses himself into the world of universal order, the world with its social relations. The ethical retains the immediacy of the aesthetic, but it raises it to a new power of justification. The particular is placed within the universal and hence is saved. "The ethical...is thus an expression for a rational order of things, in which every man fills his place in such a manner that he at the same time expresses both the universal and the individual."¹

¹Kierkegaard, Either/Or, II, 244.
The despairing of the aesthete is the process of self-determination; it is the attempt to derive a universality that will re-establish the meaning of the self. "The ethical is the universal and as such divine."¹ As the universal, however, it is not something objective, apart from the individual. It is not a set of abstract ethical principles to be followed. "The ethical individual knows himself, but this knowledge is not more contemplation .... it is a reflection upon himself which itself is an action, and therefore I have deliberately preferred to use the expression 'choose oneself' instead of know oneself."² That Kierkegaard uses a Judge to set forth the ideal of the ethical life is significant, for an ideal Judge does represent it: the unity of the subjectivity of the self with the rationality of the mind. This is a Judge, who for example, could with complete self-confidence and complete self-righteousness sentence his own son to death for violating the laws of justice. The ethicist, then, is one who knows what he is and is what he knows.

The complete disciplining of the aesthetic personality into unity with the truths of reason constitutes an ethical task which few, if any, would be capable of realizing. This is especially evident when it is considered that becoming ethical is a dynamic process. As there is growth

¹Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, p. 79.
²Kierkegaard, Either/or, II, 216.
in the mind's capacity to "valuate" such knowledge, for the individual to maintain his ethical connection requires the infinite continuance of his reflection. It is this "infinite reflection," however, which indicates the boundaries of the ethical stage, and the possibility of its transition into the religious.

Judge William in Either/Or, II, even while holding forth as the representative of the ethical, indicates first to his "young friend" that perhaps there are instances of "exceptions" to the ethical. At the end, however, he concludes with no explanation that "Every man is the universal human (ethical) and at the same time the exception."¹ In the Stages, then, this development of Kierkegaard's thought is indicated more positively when he says, "The ethical sphere is only a transitional sphere, and hence its highest expression is repentence as a negative action."²

The religious stage. Inward reflection came into being first with the despairing of the aesthete, and was the quality of thought responsible for establishing the ethical, the universal-human synthesis. Such reflection, however, is continuously required in order to maintain the

¹Ibid., 277.
²Kierkegaard, Stages, p. 420.
ethical connection of the individual subjectivity to the universal. Reflection, however, so to speak, does not know when to quit. Once developed, and operating at the point of the ethical synthesis, reflection always constitutes a threat to the individual. That is, the quality of thought necessary for establishing and maintaining the ethical is that which destroys the ethical. Thus Camus can say: 
"Beginning to think is beginning to be undermined."

Kierkegaard illustrates the collision between the ethical and the religious modes of life in his book Fear and Trembling. In this book it was the impingement of subjectivity into the ethical consciousness of Abraham, "a dimness of inwardness," that constituted the threat to his ethical existence, and which drove him to a higher level of ethical development. Johannes de silentio, the pseudonymous author, is himself in the ethical stage of existence, but he recognizes in Abraham, as he is called upon to sacrifice Isaac, the presence of something transcending the demands of the ethical. Hence he raises the question intimating the necessity of going beyond the ethical: "Is there such a thing as a teleological suspension of the ethical?"

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2 Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, pp. 64 ff.
The operation of inward reflection within the individual develops within him an awareness of meaning, meaning that manifests itself as an ethical contradiction when he finds himself in a particular situation. The soldier who, through the sights of his rifle, suddenly sees the "enemy" transformed into a fellow human being is within the grips of a terrifying paradox. The detective, Javert, in Victor Hugo's Les Miserables, is illustrative of such a paradox, a paradox in which the absolute self-righteousness of the ethical existence of an individual is suddenly transposed into a clear consciousness of its sinfulness.

Instances of sudden "revelation" such as these are rare. More frequently there are only faint intimations of such truth within the consciousness of the individual. Faulkner may or may not be correct in supposing that the Southerner today has inward intimations of his sin against the Negro. If he is correct, however, the Southerner is faced with two alternatives, both of a dreadful nature: first, the alternative of living in and maintaining his present "world" with this awareness constantly impinging into his personality; or second, the alternative of facing the "hiddenness" of this awareness within him.

Reflection reveals the "exception" to the ethical, and as the exception, the individual must either find a new synthesis or justification through the truth of inwardness.
With the appearance of the exception, there first develops the desperate search for a new synthesis, the attempt to "reconstruct" the ethical universal into conformity with the new inwardness. Reflection, however, cannot exhaust itself. There is no end to its "possibilities." And though at any one time the individual may "decide," he knows that his decision is only a "possibility" and that even yet he has the opportunity of reinterpreting everything, so that immediately everything is changed. "This phantasmagoria moves so rapidly that it is as if everything were possible.... What the self now lacks is reality—so one would commonly say... But upon closer inspection it is really (ethical) necessity the man lacks."

In this Kierkegaard agrees with Nietzsche. "Skepticism regarding morality is what is decisive.... The untenability of one interpretation of the world...awakens (us to) the suspicion that all interpretations of the world are false."

This "sea of reflection where no one can call to another, where all buoys are dialectical," is the condition necessary for transcendence to existence. It is precisely through its endless dialectical activity, through its

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1 Kierkegaard, Sickness Unto Death, p. 169.

endless dialectical activity, through its capacity "to break out of every prison of the finite, "that existence-life is possible. This is why Kierkegaard called his method "an experimental psychology," in which he was attempting to hold his "existence at that critical zero...between something and nothing, a mere perhaps."1 Perhaps it is also why Nietzsche would willingly call himself a "philosopher of the dangerous perhaps."2

Reflection at this stage of "phantasmagoria," however, can lead away from existence as well as toward it. On the one hand it can devolve into the "dialectical twaddle" of the aesthete, the aesthete who makes the most of the sophistry of existence, who enjoys everything as an "interesting possibility." Or, on the other hand, reflection can terminate in a desperate affirmation of the ethical. The intimations of the Nothingness of the ethical, and hence of the individual himself, force him into a desperate, fanatical grasping of the ethical. This is the person who appears to be absolutely self-righteous. He defies the Nothingness by proclaiming the absolution of his ethical. He cannot be tolerant or considerate, for to do so would threaten his ethical existence. He must destroy all alternative "possibilities," for it is their

1Ibid., 170.

2Ibid.
existence that constitutes an ever present threat to his precarious ethical balance, and threatens to push him into the abyss of the Nothingness. He is compelled to convert all into conformity with his ethical, either forcibly or through intellectual discourse. If the use of force is closed to him, then he must "preach." He must proclaim the "eternal validity" of the ethical to all, but this proclaiming is not in the form of an intellectual exchange with others. If he encounters one who is able to obtain the upper hand over him, then the desperation takes hold of him. At this point the exchange ceases. He withdraws in some way, by shouting down the opponent, by diverting the argument, etc.

The individual at this stage of existence exists within the conflict between the truth of inwardness and the truth of the universal ethical. These realms are incommensurable, and for reflection to avoid devolving into either ethical fanaticism or "dialectical twaddle," and in order for it to fulfill itself in existence, it must renounce the world of the universal ethical. This is the essential point of Kierkegaard's *The Sickness unto Death*. It is the sickness of having to die in order to live. Here life and death are transposed. "Death is the expression of the greatest spiritual wretchedness, and yet the cure is simply to die, to 'die from.' "

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1 Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death*, p. 143.
This also is the significance of the term "dread" for Kierkegaard. Dread arises because of the impingement of subjectivity into the consciousness, and the essential risk of freedom which it posits. The freedom, though, is the freedom of the individual to give up being anything ethically at all, with no guarantee that he will receive anything back. This is as far as he can go. The rest is up to what happens to him, or as Kierkegaard says, it is up to what God does to him. The individual can only surrender to the nihilism of possibility, and if truth is to come to him now, only God can provide it.

Dread, then, as "the psychic state of the suspended man in that desperate moment of exemption from realizing the ethical,"\(^1\) constitutes "the Nothingness out of which all is created,"\(^2\) the Nothingness which "breaks forth in... the qualitative leap."\(^3\) And the qualitative leap signifies "the breaking through of eternity"\(^4\) into consciousness.

\(^1\)Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 240.


\(^3\)Ibid., p. 54.

It is the "moment" of the emergence of the "Individual," the Individual "in his complicity with God."¹

This process of renouncing the truth of the ethical, and of regaining it through the absoluteness of subjective inwardness, Kierkegaard designated "Repetition." "Repetition is the interest of metaphysics and at the same time the interest upon which metaphysics founders."² It is "the restitution of the consciousness of the individual to its pristine integrity after an experienced breach."³ It is, however, "a movement by virtue of the absurd."⁴

With the adoption of the category of "the individual" the category of the universal-human proclaimed by Judge William in Either/Or and in Stages on Life's Way is absolutely renounced. Truth now is defined in terms of the absoluteness of subjectivity. "An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual."⁵

¹Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 138.


⁴Kierkegaard, Repetition, p. 42.

⁵Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 182.
Man is a self that wants to become himself; and he is a self that wants to become the opposite of himself, namely, an object. This antithetical duality of the self manifests itself in the striving for the ethical unity. Were the two capable of being mediated, the ethical would be the highest stage of existence. Their contradictory nature, however, makes the synthesis an impossibility and propels man into the position where he must choose. He may choose the synthesis, but it thereby becomes that which he and he alone chose, and not the synthesis of himself to it.

If he chooses the truth of inwardness, he then renounces the synthesis and chooses himself in his absoluteness. At this stage of existence the individual still has the further problem of relating himself back to the world; but it is now not a matter of relating himself as a synthesis.

Three of Kierkegaard's *Edifying Discourses*¹ deal with this infinite double movement, the movement of renouncing the world (resignation), and the movement of regaining it (faith). After renouncing the world, he receives it back. Now, however, the relationship is different. The temporal no longer controls him. He controls it.

The individual's relationship to the world of reality is now, however, a paradoxical relationship. Viewed from

the ethical, the truth of existence is absurd. And viewed from existence, the ethical is absurd. The individual whose life is grounded in existence must relate himself back to the world of reality, the social-ethical world, and live within it. That is, he must live in an absurd world. This contradiction constitutes "the narrow defile."

Kierkegaard says, "(A), a logical system is possible; (B), an existential system is impossible."\(^1\) An existential system, he continues, is one in which there is "a separation between subject and object, thought and being."\(^2\) The "narrow defile," then, is a path between two realms in which direct communication is impossible. That is, it is a path between two realms in which only "indirect communication" is possible. The individual cannot directly communicate to another the truths associated with his existence. They are wholly of a different order. Therefore, a judgment of prudence, a judgment concerning how an individual is to act, can never be explained fully in terms of a dialectic of objective reasons and principles.

Maritain develops the thesis that universal law and individual conscience are not contradictory, but must be made to relate to existential truth, that is, to "God's wisdom and justice." His criticism of Kierkegaard is for

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\(^1\)Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 99.

\(^2\)Ibid., 112.
the separation of these two realms of meaning.\(^1\) If Maritain's is an existentialism, this constitutes the essential difference between his thought and Kierkegaard's. For Kierkegaard, of course, the individual must establish a relationship with "universal law," his socio-ethical culture, but there is no assumption that he must "interiorize" it, that "the inner becomes the outer, and the outer becomes the inner," with both related to existence. The relation of "the individual" to his ethical community is a matter of establishing a practical relationship. His cultural and his moral worlds are both the work of freedom, but never a reflection of one another. Man is a free agent in both areas. In this sense Sartre is closer to Kierkegaard's thought than is Maritain, for with Sartre there is never the assumption that what the individual chooses out of his existence can then be "existentialized." The relationship back to "universal law" becomes a "form," a plan of action which the individual subscribes to without becoming. Thus Sartre can subscribe to Communism without being a Communist.

Collins says that "the solution at which Kierkegaard ultimately aimed was....the need (of the individual) to

interiorize the natural law."¹ Therefore, he contends that Kierkegaard "would have succeeded better had he elaborated a theory of natural law, in harmony with the metaphysics... which is implicit in his view of God and the individual."² This attempt to "Catholicize" Kierkegaard seems strange in view of Kierkegaard's statement, and Collins' acknowledgement of this statement, that "an existential system is impossible."

Modern existentialists have frequently forgotten Kierkegaard's warning that "an existential system is impossible." If it is, however, then an existentialist's refutation of another system is not an existential refutation. That is, it proves nothing existentially. Such discourse at the level of dialectics has, however, served existentialists as a means of indicating to "systematizers" a realm of consideration beyond that contained within their system.

Kierkegaard in this way used philosophy, not to construct a philosophy, but to attempt to discredit philosophy in its assumption of sufficiency. This, of course, was his attempt to demonstrate his major contention that systematic or speculative philosophy is inevitably involved in a process of "approximation-scepticism." It was an art,

²Ibid., p. 97.
however, which he was compelled to practice carefully if he expected to succeed in indicating the possibility of the existential realm of consideration and not merely to demonstrate the possibility of the philosophical activity itself.

Systematic, speculative philosophers are free to involve themselves in the construction of their own systems and in the refutation of other systems. Their refutations tend always to have the peculiar characteristic of indicating the possibility (or inevitability!) of the validity if not the truth of their own system. This the existentialist cannot do, for his purpose is not indicate the possibility of systems.

Kaufman notes that existentialists'have in their imaginative works reached heights of which the so-called existentialist philosophers...have for all their efforts fallen short, if they have not altogether missed their footing in their bold attempts to scale the peaks and fallen into frequent error and confusion."¹ Especially Heidegger and Jaspers, and to some degree Sartre, have fallen into this mode of communicating, "writing like professors, expounding despair and death and the attempt to know oneself in terms of quaint big words and one-two-three, and even Roman three, Arabic two, small b."²

¹Kaufman, op. cit., p. 49.
²Ibid., p. 43.
This intellectualizing of life is, although meaningless as far as establishing a basis for meaning, necessary for the transcendence to existential communication. To stop with intellectualization, however, is to fall short of the existential mode of communication. This Heidegger and Jaspers seem to do.

Existentialism, then, must have the peculiar characteristics of on the one hand appearing reasonable, and on the other hand of being presented in such a way that its reasonableness becomes superfluous, for without the latter qualification existentialism has not been presented.

The three stages do not exemplify stages within a logical system of progression; rather, "they represent the existential possibilities which lie between immediacy and spirit."¹

Swenson, in his introduction to *Stages on Life's Way*, says:

We need in fact to be warned not to regard the three stages as a prescribed curriculum which one must pass through in advancing from youth to age. Such is not S.K.'s meaning. He is not so foolish as to think that one must be an unhappy exception like Quidam (or like himself) in order to attain the religious stage—anymore than one must first be a seducer in order to become a proper married man like the Judge. Neither does he represent that one stage must definitely be left behind before a man enters upon the next...There are no definite delimitations of the spheres, and in "existence" they overlap.²


²Ibid.
"There are many ways which lead to the same truth, and each man takes his own," said Kierkegaard in one of his Discourses. And his existential method of presenting his philosophy was to show through the pseudonymous characters of his writings what was existentially involved in an individual's striving for "edification."

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"The Self," for Kierkegaard, is regarded as "a relation which relates itself to itself, or it is that in the relation (which accounts for it) that the relation relates itself to its own self; the self is not the relation but (consists in the fact) that the relation relates itself to its own self."\(^2\)

The relation is a relation of awareness or a knowledge awareness, and operates in two ways: first as the finite self, a self which functions in relating the mind to the body or "outer"; and second, as the infinite Self or "spirit," which functions in relating the Self to the mind. In the former, the object of knowledge is the material. In the latter, however, the object of knowledge is the mind's knowledge of the material. Thus, spirit is knowledge of knowledge, and not, as the mind's knowledge, knowledge of a thing, such as the body.


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 146.
If the self is defined as a relation which is an awareness relation, then as "a relation which relates itself to itself," it will be an awareness which relates itself to itself, that is, pure awareness. So defined, a relation which relates itself to itself will signify that the relation will first have to disrelate itself from the mind-body relation (the $s\rightarrow o$ relation), and second from the Self-mind relation (the $S\rightarrow so$ relation),¹ and finally to relate itself to itself. Thus related, Kierkegaard says, the Self is related to God as pure awareness.

The "gieb uns bloße Augen für Dinge, die nichts taugen," then, signifies a blindness for both the mind's awareness of the world, and the self's awareness of the mind's awareness. Disrelated from these, the self is then related to itself. Then, from this condition, only one step remains: to choose to be itself. "By relating itself to its own self and by willing to be itself (choosing) the self is grounded transparently in the Power which posited it."² This is the significance of defining the self as the "that" in the relation. The relation does relate itself to itself (and it disrelates itself from itself also), but the self as the "that" in the relation is that which chooses the relation (or rejects it). In this respect the self is a free agent.

¹So constituted it would be in the realm of Nothingness.
²Ibid., p. 147.
It should be noted, however, that the self as a relation which relates itself to itself, is a relation whose movement is away from itself. It strives outward to relate. That it will then relate itself to itself signifies that it must be turned back upon itself in order to determine itself as absolute self or pure awareness.

The self as movement downward impinges upon and into the \((s\rightarrow o)\) self. The \((s\leftarrow o)\) self as a relation, however, is also a relation of awareness. Thus there emerges the possibility of the awareness reversing itself, of proceeding \((so\leftarrow S)\) or even \((os\rightarrow S)\) as we can, if we can, speak of psychosomatic awareness— that is, the body's awareness of the mind.

It is these contradictory movements that constitute the absolute freedom of the individual, and the necessity of the "leap" at every stage of existence. The awarenesses are contradictory, and the individual must choose. (Sartre\(^1\) develops the idea that the individual by refusing to choose when choice is available to him, and thereby remains as he is, is choosing. This agrees precisely with Kierkegaard's analysis.) This is the absolute either/or involved between every stage of existence, and accounts

for Kierkegaard's statement: "Three stages of existence, but only one Either/Or."\(^1\)

To say that Kierkegaard regards the self as a synthesis of possibility and necessity, of the infinite and the finite, is correct, but can easily lead to misinterpretation. The self does contain these two potentialities. It is, however, constantly torn between them. The "that" in the relation is utterly free, dreadfully free, to choose either pole of either/or.

Kierkegaard says, "a synthesis is a relation between two factors."\(^2\) For him, however, this relation is a relation of contradictions which remain contradictory eternally. They cannot be mediated. When the relation relates itself to itself it stands thus: $S \rightarrow \neg S$, so, still an absolute contradiction.

The self is a synthesis then. That is, the "that" is related to both the finite and the infinite, to both the either and the or. To become a self, however, the "that" must choose; that is, it must renounce the synthesis...


\(^2\)Kierkegaard, Sickness Unto Death, p. 146.
Misinterpretation of Kierkegaard's thought on this subject is common. Usually the analysis runs somewhat as follows: "Kierkegaard regards man as a synthesis of the infinite and the finite." The synthesis then is conceived as the synthesizing of the relation between the (S) and the (S---o) to the relation between the s and o. This form of analysis would be satisfactory if it then did not seem to result inevitably in the idea that the (s---o) had been synthesized with the S, that the finite had been synthesized with infinite.

This is Thomte's mistake when he says, "in common with Hegelian and the German idealism as a whole....Kierkegaard regards man as a synthesis of soul and body, of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity."¹ Kierkegaard does make this statement in The Sickness Unto Death.² Note, however, that he follows it immediately with: "In short it is a synthesis. A synthesis is a relationship between two factors. So regarded, man is not yet a self."³

It may appear odd that Kierkegaard, a master in the literary and artistic use of language, should speak of

¹Thomte, op. cit., p. 110.
²Kierkegaard, Sickness Unto Death, p. 146.
³Ibid., (my italics).
"man... it is a synthesis." It is not odd, however, when his conclusion, "so regarded (as a synthesis), man is not yet a self," is taken into account. Now the implication is clear that only as the individual becomes a non-synthesis does he become a self. Man defined as s--o (aesthetic existence) or as S--so (ethical existence) is a man but he is not a self. It is only as self in these meanings dies that selfhood is attained. "Death is the expression of the greatest spiritual wretchedness, and yet the cure is simply to die, to 'die from.'"¹

If, when Kierkegaard says the self is a relationship which relates itself, the relation is conceived as the relation of the infinite self relating to the finite self and the relation of the finite self relating to the infinite self (that is, their synthesis), then the relation is not related to itself, and hence is not a self.

This form of analysis also overlooks the relation of despair to the self. "Despair is the disrelationship in a relation which relates itself to itself."² And, "If he (man) were not a synthesis, he could not despair."³

Man can despair, therefore, as a synthesis man is a disrelationship in the relation which relates itself to

¹Ibid., p. 143.
²Ibid., 148.
³Ibid., p. 149.
itself. As a self, however, he is not a disrelationship. On the contrary, the self is a relation which relates itself to itself. Man, therefore, as a self is not a synthesis.

Those concerned with interpreting existentialism, Kierkegaard's existentialism, as in some way involving this synthesis of the "inner with the outer," or the synthesis of the infinite with the finite, reject its absolutism, the absolute paradox of the either/or. The category of the "individual" implies the destruction of the finite self, and the return to the finite world is not, for Kierkegaard, a synthesis. This is what is meant by the necessity of the "leap" that is involved between them. Man must live in both worlds, but they are "absurd" worlds, one unto the other.

Another example of the attempt to interpret Kierkegaard's thought as involving the synthesis of the finite self and the infinite self is the metaphysical analysis of his thought. This is illustrated by Thomte's analysis of Kierkegaard's statement that "...each individual apprehends the ethical essentially only in himself, because the ethical is his complicity with God."¹ This last clause, Thomte says,² saves Kierkegaard from an absolute

¹Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 138.
²Thomte, op. cit., p. 211.
solipism. This I believe would be nonsense to Kierkegaard. Or, "How interesting," he might say. "Are you certain there is not another 'interesting possibility'?"

Solipism is a "thought category," and as such has no claim existentially to either truth or falsity. To criticize Kierkegaard, or to analyze his philosophy in these terms, is to impose upon it a criterion for truth other than the existentialist's. For example, an "analyzer" who interprets (and he could be only an interpreter) Kierkegaard's "God" in the above statement as the "God" which saves him from solipism, could hardly accept the first clause without serious qualification. Certainly God is an ethical category, and to justify His validity on the intellectual necessity of escaping solipism is to leave at least one ethical truth outside the individual. Thome-te's analysis here also ignores Kierkegaard's contention that "an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation process of the most passionate interest is the truth." Solipism, as it is an "objective uncertainty," would, for Kierkegaard, at least qualify for truth.

The relation of Kierkegaard's theory of the stages of existence to his theory of the development of the self is apparent. Both present the idea that true meaning—*existential* meaning— is available only through the process
of becoming subjective, and his main concern in both cases is with developing the complexities involved in the individual's "apprehension of inwardness."

Kierkegaard's concern was not with the determination of the meaning of objective problems of knowledge. His insistence was that such problems had no necessary meaning for the existence of an individual, and that meanings connected with existence had to be appropriated in a way different than one would appropriate the meaning of objective problems. There are, for example, certainly many problems of an objective nature in the life of a "professor." There are existence problems, also, Kierkegaard would insist, that cannot be resolved objectively. Is the professor to be a professor? Or is he to be a husband to his wife? Intelligence is insufficient for the resolution of contradictions of this order, Kierkegaard tells us. And he for whom these are not contradictions is not both a professor and a husband.

The female (not to prejudice the issue) of the teaching profession faces an even more critical paradox. Is she to become "the teacher?" Or is she to be a woman?

Kierkegaard agrees with Dewey in his emphasis upon the "indeterminate situation" as being central in the

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1T. L. Collier, in a mimeographed article distributed at Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, 1947, entitled "The Personality of the School Teacher," speaks of "the old maid school teachers, both male and female."
learning process. Contrary to Dewey, however, he maintained that the situation can be resolved only after the individual has worked out in inwardness what it means for example to be a husband, a woman, or a teacher.

The different concepts Kierkegaard develops in his presentation of the stages and his theory of the self are not meant by him to be metaphysical categories for describing existence. They are meant, rather, to be devices for helping an individual gain insight into the qualitative nature of the existence of others and perhaps his own existence. The terms "stages" and "self" are not intended by him as literal presentations of the nature of reality, life, or human nature. He used these categories as literary categories, intending only to intimate existentially, through the medium of "indirect communication," the basic mentality of the "subjective thinker."

Finally, Kierkegaard is trying only to show us that there is a different way of experiencing, of deriving new meaning from the experiences we do have; that if we turn our attention inward "for self-examination" in a mood of serious subjective involvement, then there will be an awareness of meaning available to us that otherwise would not appear. Even here, however, Kierkegaard's motto is, choose or do not choose. You are free. You are, however, also responsible!
If there is any message in Kierkegaard, it is certainly this: that man should accept the responsibility himself, as an individual, for the determination of the meaning of his existence. In this respect it is perhaps well that he did not live to see the categories he developed being used by man to categorize their existence and thus as devices for avoiding responsibility.

For Kierkegaard man is neither a social function nor a philosophical abstraction, but a self to be developed. Neither gods, governments, ideologies, nor other men can choose for the individual what he alone must choose if his life is to be lived in accordance with his own authentic existence. Authentic existence, however, results only from the development of the potentialities of spirit inhering within the self. Education, then, is the process of the development of spirit.
EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRIT

Generally speaking, imagination is the medium of the process of infinitizing; it is not one faculty on a par with others, but, if one would so speak, it is the faculty instar omnium (for all faculties). What feeling, knowledge, or will a man has, depends in the last resort upon what imagination he has, that is to say, upon how these things are reflected, i.e., it depends upon imagination. **Imagination is the reflection of the process of infinitizing.**

The development of the self is initiated by reflection; "and imagination is reflection, it is the counterfeit presentment of the self. Imagination is the possibility of all reflection, and the intensity of this medium is the possibility of the intensity of the self." The development of self, then, depends upon the intensifying of imagination.

**Imagination is outward, cognitive reflection. This is an "immediate," aesthetic category.** As an "immediate," outward cognitive relation of awareness, imagination passes

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2Ibid., p. 164.
over into wonder as it turns in upon itself as "self-involvement," --as reflection becomes "inward reflection," and as seriousness becomes "self-seriousness" and not merely a seriousness about that which is external to the self as is the case say, with many a "child prodigy."

Imagination and wonder in their respective roles here are the "categories of transcendence." And the development of these capacities is that which permits the student's development from the aesthetic to the ethical and beyond.

The movement from aesthetic imagination to wonder signifies the student's transcendence of his immediacy--the student who through some degree of inwardness has appropriated a normative standard beyond those defined in terms of the immediate pleasure of the moment.

Imagination, then, as the initial movement of spirit (and as the initiator of this movement) to wonder (and it is wonder to the degree and intensity that it is turned inward in self-involvement), must be maintained, for to negate it is to negate the possibility of wonder. To negate it is to remove any possibility for there developing any movement to wonder, for wonder and imagination are the same movement, except that they move in the opposite direction.

The transcendence from the aesthetic imagination to wonder is something that must be nourished and guided very carefully by the teacher. A danger develops at this point,
however. Kierkegaard notes, "Wonder is an ambiguous state of the soul, containing both fear and bliss."¹ Caught in the conflict between the attraction for, and yet repulsion from, that which is not yet, the student is in a realm of nothingness.² The direction of movement from this becomes a very hypothetical (as witness, for example, those who retreat-- the true psychopath and genuine Bohemian, and those who waver between the aesthetic and "moodiness"--the genuine to a degree, but pseudo to a degree, psychopath and Bohemian) and complex affair, dependent upon the experiences encountered, but critically influenced by the reactions and treatment of others who come in contact with the individual.


²Were Sartre's statement "Man is a For-itself that wants to be an In-itself" taken to be literally correct, no movement would be possible. With the movement only attractive in one direction, there is nothing to initiate its movement in the opposite direction. Sartre continues to implore us to choose ourselves in our "authentic existence" (but in itself an absurd authentic existence). If I am only repelled from this existence, however, and its opposite ("in-authenticity," "existence in itself") is the only attraction, where is the choice? This condition would be similar to asking a thirsty man to choose between salt and water.

Furthermore, if "authentic existence" is always that which repels, how did Sartre attain the possibility of idealizing it?
The moral responsibility of all is apparent in this respect. The teacher, specifically, though, is charged with the responsibility of making his contact with the student a positive one. The influence must be one that leads the student into his development as a self, or the furtherance of his development as a self. The teacher cannot "move" the student. Only the student can do that. The teacher can help, however. And he can help in two ways:

First, he provides the stimulus for the movement. There are, however, two major ways in which the teacher functions in this capacity. He can enhance the imagination, the "intellectual curiosity" of the student. The enhancement of intellectual curiosity does not guarantee movement, but, if properly handled, it does increase the "possibility" of movement in that it increases the range of stimuli whose possible effects could be "involvement."

The teacher also functions in the guidance of the student into the "imaginative consideration" of that which will induce the movement to wonder. In terms of the present level of intellectual and spiritual development of the student, it is the consideration of what that will induce reflection?

Buber says, "Education means to let a selection of the world affect a person through the medium of another
person."¹ In this sense, the teacher must select wisely, and he must know his student well to be able to make such a judgment. The background, capacities, concerns, interests, and aversions are important in determining what the teacher will lead the student into, and how he will do it.

The second general way in which the teacher assists in the movement of the student is as a source of encouragement, reliability, and dependability; that is, he must attain the position of trust and confidence within the eyes of his students. This is difficult to do. Students are naturally suspicious. Their adult contacts have not been noted for their assistance in releasing them into their own development. They have, rather, been noted more for their attempts to develop a "defined" child, regardless of the workings of spirit within him. Children subconsciously perceive and resent this.

If the teacher can, however, attain the level of trust and confidence for his students, he can become a source of assistance in helping them into a mood of self-involvement, and in helping them face this conflict constructively.

Helping students face this conflict—the conflict between the "is" and the "not yet" intimated by wonder—constructively, defines the essential meaning of

discipline: the teacher's disciplining of the student, and the student's developing the capacity to discipline himself—that is, developing the capacity to face squarely the intimations of spirit that are stirring within him.

Without help, or encouragement, or by "meddling" with the student, the movement can take the form of an escape, an escape from the intimations which wonder reveals. In this sense, there is a retreat. The student closes out or represses the "vision" and "sets" himself in his "is" category of existence.

The imaginative aesthete will reflect, and these moments must be seized upon, maintained, and extended. Dorian Grey, with someone other than Lord Henry as a teacher, might have developed into a self.

Small children easily and often turn their concern in upon themselves. They are naturally serious. There is the example of a sixth grade girl, whose intellectual and personal-social development was decidedly deficient. One day a strange event occurred. As the girl was attempting, in a very hesitating, embarrassed manner, to read a report to the class, she induced laughter and comments from the other students. The girl became more and more embarrassed, and more and more hesitating, until finally she broke into tears and fled to her seat.

A quietness came over the class, a self-consciousness, as there was a realization of what they had done.
Subsequently there was a transformation of the relationships between this girl and the other members of the class, relationships characterized much more by humaneness and sympathy.

It is only as children mature that they lose the capacity to wonder. Then there develops a callousness, a "hardening of the categories," with spirit's being aware of little if anything beyond the "categories."

At every point in the education of spirit the necessity of solitude is obvious, for meaning, stemming from wonder, is essentially derived from the communication of the self with the self. As Emerson said: "The need for solitude is the measure for what spirit a man has."

Current tendencies in education and culture are operative to the detriment of spirit. The excessive emphasis on overt behavior is illustrated by the rise in popularity of the "social" and "activity" curriculums. But generally within any educational system a student exhibiting solitary, self-reflective tendencies is not helped or let alone in his striving for meaning. In education, the teacher then deems it his responsibility to bring such a student into the group, to cooperate and participate. What he really needs is "socializing," perhaps to learn to dance. This emphasis in education has reached the point that today the "sociogram" is that which is used to depict the good class.
The notion that this emphasis on the "other-directed" personality is a unique development of the modern industrial culture is probably overdone. Witness, for example, Kierkegaard's estimation of his culture in 1846:

Generally the need of solitude is a sign that there is spirit in a man after all, and it is a measure for what spirit there is. The purely twaddling and too-human men are to such a degree without feeling for the need of solitude that like a certain species of social birds (the so-called love birds) they promptly die if for an instant they have to be alone. As the little child must be put to sleep by a lullaby, so these men need the tranquilizing hum of society before they are able to eat, drink, sleep, pray, fall in love, etc. But in ancient times as well as in the Middle Ages people were aware of the need of solitude and had respect for what it signifies. In the constant sociability of our age people shudder at solitude to such a degree that they know no other use to put it to but... as a punishment for criminals. But after all it is a fact that in our age it is a crime to have spirit, so it is natural that such people, the lovers of solitude, are included in the same class with criminals.¹

The inclusion of solitude within the educative process signifies not necessarily the withdrawal of students from others. Basically, it means the non-interference in the relation of the self to the self, either the stilling of wonder or its diversion back to imagination. Anything can have this diverting effect, either a person, or

¹Kierkegaard, Sickness Unto Death, p. 198.
The three closely printed dots (...) are used by the translator to indicate, not the deletion of words from the original, but a form of punctuation similar to the dash, with the exception that an unexpected conclusion is indicated.
an objective event within the environment. On the other hand, they need not have. The "group" (as a group of individuals, and not as the term signifies in much of the educational literature: a group with a "dynamics" of its own.) or the history lecture can be of such a nature as to permit some contact of the self with the self. For the disciplined involvement necessary, however, extended periods of time in which wonder could continue to intensify itself, without being diverted back to imagination, would be necessary.

The danger of the "adored" teacher is indicated here, however. He interferes with the student's wonder relationship. Not that he diverts it, but that he freezes it at a point that prevents the intensifying of subjectivity. The student identifies with him. He is "attached" to him, and in many cases he desperately attaches so as to avoid the fear of the "not yet." Such a teacher does not know how to withdraw from his student. He is too quick to suggest. For Kierkegaard, however, "Every individual is in essence equally adapted for eternity and essentially related to the eternal, the human teacher is a vanishing transition." The teacher, himself, is no more than this 

his instruction on any other basis, he does not give but takes away, and is not even the other's friend, must less his teacher."

One further thing needs to be said concerning the imagination--wonder relation. Imagination represents the possibility for the development of all inward involvement. It is, however, the possibility of avoiding any such involvement. This is the impingement of the initial either/or into the consciousness of the student. It is the ambiguity.

As imagination offers itself as the "bliss" of the paradox, it becomes the means of avoiding the self. At the same time it is the only means of developing the self, for it is the intensification of imagination that turns it inward to relate the self with the self.

Imagination is outward, cognizant reflection, the self's concern with the meaning that is over and against the self: the finite meaning. A danger at this stage of development is that imagination will not pass over into wonder, for not having reversed its direction it can never become the means for the intensification of spirit. The person remains an aesthete. His imaginative efforts produce

nothing for the development of his self. His intellect, if his imaginative capacities continue to develop, may grow to great heights. His self, however, remains nothing.

The focusing of attention on that which is external to the self becomes the self's means of avoiding the relationship with the self. One such object, however, and a not too unusual one, is the activity of imagination itself. This results in the absolutizing of imagination. For this person, the imagination itself has become the escape from the risk of the "not yet" involved in the relation of wonder. The fear of the ambiguity is exclusively avoided by recourse to a concern for the "interesting possibility." The person does not have to wonder. He can think. He does not have to be anything. He can just think about being something. "He keeps existence away by the most subtle of all deceptions, by thinking."¹

There are two types of personalities characterized by an undue concern for the intellectual: the true aesthete, or he who has formed an attachment to the imaginative but only as an immediate, enjoyable concern, and the person who attaches himself to the imaginative activity to avoid the "risk."

The first is the person whose interest in intellectual activity is only as an immediate joyous activity; the playing with ideas and their relationships is that which satisfies his "immediacy." (The World's Champion checker player spends four hours a day "contemplating" checker moves.) This may result in intellectual genius, but seldom does. The person is too "out-going." There is usually the existence of a diversity of immediate satisfactions which control him and which interfere with the intensive development of any one of them. He may be extremely "interested" in the consideration of ideas falling within a certain area. Where their comprehension requires the necessity of an intensive, disciplined mode of thought, however, he loses interest and finds another interesting area. This stage of development, if extended, results in the intellectual dilettante.

The second type of intellectual aesthete is the person who is attached to this mode of activity, not only for its "immediate" function, but as an escape from the dread of the intimations of spirit. This is not the aesthete of immediacy. His "existence stage" can range from the first stage beyond the aesthetic to the stage just prior to the "leap to eternity." That is, the person is neither in the
"defined" stage,¹ the "immediate stage," nor the ethico-religious stage. He is in Nothingness, the compulsion of Nothingness, and he desperately clings to it—the desperation depending on the degree of intensity with which his subjectivity is maintaining him; that is, the desperation depending on which stage of existence he is in.

He returns to the outside, "into the distractions of great undertakings...(the intellectual life in this case), but constantly with consciousness of the self which he does not want to have."² He does not identify, either with inwardness or outwardness. He desperately seeks to maintain the equilibrium between the finite and the infinite. This in turn issues in the desperate search for a distraction which will permit the avoidance of the choice.

The transcendence from the aesthetic to the ethical also creates an educational problem. The student must become the ethical. He must develop his ethical principles and ideals and he must become them. That is, their validity for him must spring out of his own personality.

The problem of this point is what might be called the problem of "the true Believer." Here the ethically defined

¹The intellectual in this stage would be the ethical intellectual. That is, "intellectualism" would define his existence.

²Kierkegaard, Sickness Unto Death, p. 199.
life has become so defined that either an intellectual movement or the movement of spirit beyond its boundaries is impossible. The intellect has been stilled and spirit has been stilled. They are synonomously quiet. Nothing can disturb the person.

Education for such people has been a failure, a failure in that neither the imaginative capacities nor the capacity to wonder has been sufficiently developed. To avoid this, education must continue in its emphasis upon the development of intellectual curiosity, for it is this which opens up a more ethically advanced "interesting possibility," for the student to become, if he has the spirit to do so. Without the capacity for intensifying subjectivity, however, only the intellectual definition of the student changes.

Education must assist the student in this transfer from the aesthetic to the ethical, but in such a way that both the intellect and spirit are capable of operating beyond its bounds.

The imagination-wonder relationship, then, becomes critical in the development of the self as a self. Wonder is the analysis of the mind's meaning. It is the possibility of this direction reversing itself, however, and the "moments" of its doing so, that gives rise to "dread": first the dread of the aesthete; and, second, the dread of the ethicist.
Thus, the imagination→to wonder→to dread process is the path to self-realization. Imagination passes over into wonder, the exercise of which occasions the possibility of the "moment" of reversal.

As imagination goes to wonder, or as the self is related to the mind's meaning, it is also related to its own meaning--i.e., the opposite of the mind's meaning. If the imagination-wonder relation is not maintained, then, 1) at the aesthetic stage, there will be no movement to the ethical; and, 2) if it is not maintained at the ethical stage, there will be no movement beyond to the self's unique meaning. That is, the ethical will become stagnant within the individual. He is the ethical, but he has not spirit enough to be anything other than the ethical, which means he has not wonder enough to give rise to the "moment" of reversal, which occasions the possibility of "transcendence."

If the imagination has died out of the ethical, there will not be the possibility of wonder enough to even maintain the ethical. For without wonder there is a weakening of spirit and the individual returns to the aesthetic, but now with a conditioned-dulled and stunted imagination--that is, without the possibility of being imaginative enough to become the ethical again. Such an individual is nothing. He is an aesthete, but he is not even a good
aesthete, for that requires imagination. He is the Philis-
tine aesthete.

This is the advantage of the "absolutized intellectual" and the aesthetic intellectual over the unimaginative. They both run the continuous risk of the imagination passing over into wonder.

To even maintain the ethical, then, there must be imagination enough to give rise to wonder, for it is in wonder that the "moment" of the self "breaks through," and the ethical requires, to be the ethical, the participation of the self within it.

Imagination, then, is the quality par excellence of the human personality. Without it the self cannot be a self, or cannot become itself. To function in this capacity, however, it must constantly reverse itself into the wonder relation.

This indicates the deficiency of the application of Dewey's "thinking process," or process of "inquiry" to education. Within Dewey's conception of thought the term "growth" as it functions, (a) in the continuous reconstruction of the students' ideas, attitudes, beliefs, etc., and (b) in the continuous reconstruction and extension of the students' knowledge (as an awareness within personality) of the significance or consequences of these ideas, attitudes and beliefs, is defined exclusively as an intellectual empirical affair. And the joint fulfillment of
these two processes defines the "complete act of thought," which in turn defines the complete function of education: "the reconstruction or reorganization of experience which (a, above) adds to the meaning of experience, and which (b, above) increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience."\textsuperscript{1}

In speaking of experience, Dewey does note that there are two phases to an experience, "a doing and an undergoing," or "an active and a passive" phase. The terms undergoing and passive might be thought to indicate the influence of some form of subjective analysis. This is not the case for Dewey. The terms do signify that the individual has been thrown back upon himself (within himself) with the possibility arising of the necessity of reconstructing his ideas, etc. The reconstruction of ideas, however, proceeds along strictly intellectual lines. It is, in fact, that type of inquiry characterized by Dewey as the logical, intellectual consideration of "the relationship of ideas to ideas." It is that type of inquiry which Dewey called scientific inquiry.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1}John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan Co., 1915), p. 89.

The other type of inquiry involved in the thinking process is, corresponding to (b) above, "common sense inquiry." The concern of this is with the idea-consequence relation; that is, it is concerned with the knowledge, both actual and probable, of the consequences stemming from ideas. This type of inquiry (which must be conducted in conjunction with the previous type) includes not only the logical and intellectual determination of the relationship, but, to the degree possible, the empirical experimental determination.

As applied to education there is nothing in this "complete act of thought" which is not of an objective, intellectual nature, and which would not keep a student's attention directed exclusively to that which is "over and against" him.¹

¹"Over and against" either mentally, that is, as ideas, thoughts, hypotheses, within the head; or as meaning applying to "objects" or "events" external to the mind, that is, as the mind is related in a meaning relation to an external situation. In this sense, for the mind to think of a star purely as a mental idea, or to think of a star while being related to one in a perception relation, either relationship is a relationship of the mind to the "outer"; either is defined exclusively within the same relationship.
Although no subjective analysis occurs within this inquiry process, as stated by Dewey, there is a point where the occasion for such reflection arises. The "reconstruction of experience" first requires an analysis of the mind's beliefs by the self. That is, for its proper functioning, it requires the self's concern with the location of the mind's knowledge.

Kierkegaard would say that at this point—at the point of the mind's awareness of its knowledge—that there is the inevitable "danger" of the continuance of this relation, the wonder relation, which in turn inevitably brings forth the "possibility" of the wonder relation reversing itself into a relation with the self. That is, within any wonder relation there always exists the possibility of the "moment" bursting through, and the individual then exists as an "ambiguity."

If, by the application of Dewey's thinking process, then, this awareness of the mind's meaning is permitted to continue without being diverted immediately to the realm of imagination, there will exist the possibility of the self relating itself to itself.

According to the proper functioning of Dewey's thinking process, however, the individual is always encouraged to return immediately to the imaginative, to return immediately and conduct the reconstruction process according
to an analysis between "mind's beliefs" and the meaning "out there." (And again, "out there" can very well be in the mind.) Thus, within this thinking process the self's concern with its own knowledge is of only momentary duration—until there is the consciousness of its nature. At this point, the inquirer is advised to become purely objective and to concentrate on the imaginative reconstruction.

The application of such a thinking process to education, Kierkegaard would say, will result in the following:

1. If within this thinking process there is wonder enough to occasion the intimations of self, this then places the individual in the ambiguousness between the two. If the intimations continue and are not submerged, but if the individual is repelled from them for fear of them, then the undue emphasis upon the imagination offers itself to him as a means of escaping himself. The imagination here offers itself as a means of discovering and maintaining the completeness of his being within the "distraction," that is, as a means for avoiding the fear involved within wonder. He cannot be the ethical for that requires him to reflect upon his mind's knowledge, to wonder, and to do this is to throw him back into the dread of his ambiguity...he must maintain the complete neutrality between the spheres. He must lose himself in something
that requires neither the self's facing of its God—relationship, nor the facing of its mind's relationship, for, with the individual in this existence-condition, the slightest traffic with the latter is to produce the former—the dread of ambiguity.

The individual at this stage becomes the absolutized something or other—the frantic socialite, the world's best dressed man or woman, the world's champion something or other, or perhaps he grasps upon the intellectual activity itself as an activity within which his desperate involvement will permit the avoidance of the ambiguity.

Although this advanced "existence-condition" is at every moment a possibility at the ethical stage, at any time that the mind is permitted to reflect upon the mind's ethical definition, the probability of its developing is in proportion to the self's capacity to wonder about its mind's knowledge, and in proportion to the frequency of the opportunity to do so. As indicated above, the application of Dewey's thinking process would provide little opportunity for such reflection. Hence, this existence stage would be a rare occurrence within those trained to think in accordance with his formula.

2. If as a result of this thinking process the imagination becomes a constituent of the ethical (and as Dewey's philosophy or thinking process is accepted by the individual, it is a constituent of his ethical), then
there occurs a paradoxical development. If it becomes the ethical that the ethical is the conscious avoidance of the wonder relation, that the process of noting mind's knowledge immediately as objectivity is the ethical obligation of the individual, then the imagination, precisely because it is a constituent of the ethical, will wither away.

The ethical requires intercourse with the self's awareness of the self to maintain itself. Without this constant recourse to the Self, the spirit dies out of it, and it devolves into the aesthetic. Imagination, then, as a constituent of the ethical would, to maintain itself as the ethical, require the passage of imagination over into wonder, and it would require this to the point that there was the sufficient opportunity for the "moments" derived from the wonder relation to ground the ethical within the individual as self-participation, for self-participation is necessary for the ethical to maintain itself as an existence sphere. With the imagination as a constituent of the ethical, however, this would be the contradiction of the ethical. Hence, the imagination as a constituent of the ethical is a contradiction.

Imagination is an aesthetic category, and placed within the ethical will inevitably destroy it. The total ethical personality, and the imagination in this case as a constituent of it, will regress toward aesthetic existence. This means that lacking the concern for the self's
meaning (wonder), the imaginative life itself becomes a hollow game. There is a boredom that sets in as one declares, as so many students do declare, that all is relative. Imagination, then, as an ethical constituent destroys itself, and the individual steadily regresses to the level of the Philistine aesthete by way of "the beat generation."

3. Another foreseeable result of Dewey's thinking process or education is that there would not be the sufficient occasion for wonder to maintain the ethical. Its regression toward the aesthetic in this case would follow the same course as in (2) above, with the possible advantage that the imagination would not be a constituent of the ethical, and hence, would not suffer the same fate as the ethical. That is, there would emerge the possibility of the individual's becoming the "aesthetic intellectual" which then gives rise to the possibility of imagination passing over into wonder, and the eventual transcendence to the ethical and beyond.

This educational consequence would be the most that could be hoped for from the application of Dewey's thinking process.

4. The last predictable consequence is that the wonder relation would occur at a rate of frequency capable only of maintaining the ethical...but nothing more. This is "the true believer," not in the sense, however, that he
believes with a passion, for that requires a higher degree of self-participation within the ethical than he possesses. He believes, more in the sense of an absolute self-evidence. He has the spiritual quality neither more nor less for it to be otherwise.

Such a "believer" would, as a result of Dewey's system, at least be an imaginative, intellectual believer, perhaps an imaginative genius. His ethical, however, would remain the same. Such persons become, not because there is a drive to be, but merely because they by "nature" are, the intellectual spokesman of the defined. Such a role is the natural outgrowth of their personality.

The fundamental defect in Dewey's philosophy, Kierkegaard would say, is its conception of doubt. A student's concentration on the resolution of doubt as that which exists between the mind's meaning and the meaning "out there," and the development of this as an habitual characteristic of his personality, does nothing for the resolution of the doubt which wonder occasions. Hence, it does nothing for the self-development of the student.

It is apparent that the existentialists' criticism of education, which is here directed to Dewey's education, would apply to any system that placed the exclusive emphasis upon intelligence, that is, intelligence defined as the self's procurement of meaning from the analysis of that which is over and against it. Thought trained to
confine itself to this cannot pass to wonder, and, for the 
existentialist, it is the relationship of wonder that gives 
rise to the student’s "complicity with God."

In education, then, the concern must be with securing 
a balance between imagination and wonder. The problem 
would be to develop the imatinate curiosity of the stu-
dent without permitting it to become a means for avoiding 

wonder. Students, then, must be stopped at points in their imagination activities, and forced to turn their attention inward as wonder.
"That Individual" - His Freedom and Responsibility

All man's alibis are unacceptable: no Gods are responsible for his condition; no original sin; no heredity, and no environment; no race, no caste, no father, and no mother; no wrong-headed education, no governess, no teacher; not even an impulse or a disposition, a complex or a childhood trauma. Man is free; but his freedom does not look like the glorious liberty of the Enlightenment; it is no longer the gift of God. Once again, man stands alone in the universe, responsible for his condition.¹

Man is caught in the paradox of desiring, on the one hand, to be and to become himself and, on the other hand, of wanting to escape the dread and loneliness of being only himself, of having nothing other than himself to depend upon and to be responsible to.

Escape from freedom. Freedom is that which we desire least. We have a natural desire to be not free, to escape from the dread of such freedom into the security of the category, for he who is not known under some category is lost. It is a fear, Kierkegaard said, that if we were to

become particular existing human beings, we would vanish tracelessly.¹

"There is a longing in the human mind for eternal truths embodies in fixed formulas which we need not discuss, modify or correct. We do crave for a constant rule for life, a sure guide to heaven. Devotion to a master who lays down the law gives us rest, confidence and security."² Unless he belonged somewhere,...he would feel like a particle of dust and be overcome by his individual insignificance. He would not be able to relate himself to any system which would give meaning and direction to his life, he would be filled with doubt, and this doubt eventually would paralyze his ability to act--that is, to live."³

Man is free, but he does not want to be free. He wants a home, a home which will permit him to escape his freedom. William Styron's book, *Lie Down in Darkness*, is illustrative of this tendency in the adolescent of today.


In the following the teen-age daughter is conversing with her father:

I've wanted to be normal. I've wanted to be like everybody else. These old folks wouldn't believe that there are children who'd just throw back their heads and howl, who'd just die, to be able to say, 'Well now my rebellion's over, home is where I want to be, home is where Daddy and Mother want me. Not with a sort of take-me-back-I've-been-so-wrong attitude--because.... you can believe me, most kids these days are not wrong or wrongdoers, they're just aimless and lost, more aimless than you ever thought of being."

In our effort to escape from aimlessness and lostness, "we are ready to get rid of our individual self, either by submission to new forms of authority or by compulsive conforming to accepted patterns."2

By identifying the self with something other than the self the responsibility is transferred from the self to the other. "All the shrewdness of 'man' seeks one thing: to be able to live without responsibility,"3 and he is able to do this by becoming a "particular" that is subsumed within a "universal"--a thought system. Then the individual has no responsibility. The system is responsible.

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1William Styron, Lie Down in Darkness (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1951), p. 34.

2Fromm, op. cit., p. 135.

In this sense, all major crimes of history are committed by a system. No one is responsible for them. Wars are never fought by men against men. Wars are beyond the realm of personal crime, they are just thoughts. The effect of social institutions--culturally established thought systems--serves the same function. They themselves assume the full responsibility. No one is, or was, responsible for the death of Joan of Arc. The Church did it. In a typical philosophy of education class of 112 college seniors, on the day that "their" state was electrocuting a man, not one student would acknowledge the responsibility for this man's death. The State did it.

In a particular economic system the employer can use an employee as he would any other machine. He can pay him what the market demands, whether it is a living wage or a starving wage. He can retain him or dismiss him, regardless of the consequences of this upon the life of this person. Anything can happen, and as long as it is the consequence of the system, no one is responsible. What is responsible? Probably the "law of supply and demand," or the "law of surplus labor."

Man is not exclusively a being that wants to escape himself, however. There is also within his character the desire to be released, to escape from the repression of "necessity," a desire that at times manifests itself by
a "leap" into that which does release him from such Necessity. When there is this "leap" into that which releases him, however, then, due to his impulse to "externalize," that which released him again becomes that which imprisons him. It becomes not that which he created but a thing-in-itself, above and beyond him, to which he must conform. He becomes the slave of his own creation. The original truth of subjectivity is lost when it is transferred to the "form," or the "essence." Bergson notes that the philosopher himself, "in so far as he formulates, develops, and translates into abstract ideas what he brings, is already in a way his own disciple."¹ That is, the philosopher's basic subjective insight into metaphysical reality is lost. This is why Kierkegaard affirms the truth of Luther. "Reason is a whore," for the concentration upon it inevitably diverts man's attention away from the source of his true freedom.

The original supposition of the identity of thought and being is responsible for our enslavement, and, what is worse, our enslavement to that which is absolutely removed from essential truth. Being is approximated only through subjectivity and the "possibilities" of freedom inherent within this source are infinite.

The basic motive of Kierkegaard's philosophy is concerned with this release of the individual, the release into that which will free him. Anything can become repressive to the human spirit. At this point it then becomes necessary for the individual to transcend himself, to become the individual "who as the individual is higher than the universal." Note how this became necessary for the merman. He, as he was saved from the "immediacy" of the aesthetic stage, could no longer seduce Agnes. Ethically speaking, then, how is a merman to acquire Agnes? If he is, he must go beyond the ethical.

Any thought structure, no matter how well entrenched (self-evident) as the Volksgeist (or regardless of the degree of universality of the Volk), can make a merman out of us. Then the "absurd" is our only source of freedom. The Greeks, for example, to escape from the suffocation
of "fate" were compelled to leap to the absurd.\(^1\) Whitehead notes this when he says, "A static value, however serious and important, becomes unendurable by its appalling monotony of endurance. The soul cries aloud for release into change. It suffers the agonies of Claustrophobia."\(^2\)

Kierkegaard's own "affair" with Regina was an example of this. There was every ethical reason why he should have Regina. As an aesthetic individual he could not have her, for he, as in the case of the merman, was beyond the aesthetic stage of existence. As a religious individual

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\(^1\) Susanne K. Langer's "new key" (Philosophy in a New Key (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1942), has obvious similarities to this. Philosophies, as "symbolic structures," or thought structures, are devices which both imprison and release man. As established modes of thought, there arise conditions in which the established thought functions to the detriment of man. Within this "symbolic structure," however, there does not even exist the possibility of discovering or becoming aware of the "predicament" in which man now exists. The creation of a new philosophy, then, represents a "key" for revealing new questions and for revealing new modes of analyzing such questions. "If we would have new knowledge," then, Dr. Langer says, "we must get us a whole world of new questions." (page 10). Cf. Felix Cohen, "What is a Question?" The Monist, XXXIX (1929), 3:350-364.)

The question left unanswered, however, is: What accounts for the appearance of a new "mind" that permits this ability to see new problems and new "reality" when the potentiality for the appearance of the new did not exist within the structure of the old?

with his knowledge grounded in a higher level of awareness, Kierkegaard considered himself as an "exception," and he could not have her. But here Kierkegaard's religiosity became his ethical. It was higher than the ethical as the universal-human, and therefore binding upon him. This stage, although it was the highest authority he had, was, however, destroying him. It was necessary, therefore, for the release of his personality, for his "edification," to secure an awareness of new meaning through a deeper and more intense level of subjectivity. Kierkegaard himself recognized this when in his Journal he noted: "Had I had faith I should have stayed with Regina....If I had really believed that 'with God all things are possible,' hence also the resolution of this--my melancholy, my powerlessness, my fear, my alienation, fraught with destiny, from woman and from the world--then I would have stayed with Regina."

Kierkegaard's confession here is not the point of interest. What is of interest is the point he made, the point he was unable to realize: namely, "only the truth which edifies is truth for you;" and "With God all things are possible."

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2Kierkegaard, Either/Or, II, 294.
Every means of establishing the meaning of life, every stage in which man finds himself caught up, can become paralyzing to the human personality. Then there is the upsurge of spirit seeking release into that which will release it. Then it becomes necessary to draw from the springs of existence a new authority. There are those faint intimations of "eternity," which always subsist within the individual, and which reflection produce, that constitute the unlimited source of his release. For "With God all things are possible."

The eternal restlessness of spirit, its "eternal disquietude," as Kierkegaard said, creates the problem of the individual and society, and is the motivating factor for the necessity of the continuous transformation of institutions and organizations. To cling to and enforce the old authority is suppression of the human spirit. It inevitably leads either to rebellion and revolution, or to the destruction of spirit itself.

There is a choice, the existentialist says. Either relationships can be established that will permit the release of the individual into his self-development, or relationships can be established that will freeze the spirit at a particular stage. And as man gains more power to control the environment, and hence to affect other men on
a more encompassing scale, he acquires more power to realize either of these alternatives.

The tendency toward the latter has produced the problem of "the organization man." An "individual's" relationship to the organization and to other, however, would be quite different from that represented by the individual in Whyte's *The Organization Man*. An "individual's" "validity" rests on that which is qualitatively different from the implicit thought structure of the organization, and, although relating himself to the organization, there is no assumption on his part of its sufficiency for himself or for anyone else. He chooses, but he recognizes the absurdity of the choice. He walks "the narrow defile" as best he can, but he knows that that which he judges to be in the closest proximity with his "truth in inwardness" represents no truth. This gives his relationship to others a special quality. By the very act of being an "individual," he knows that he has no authority to speak for another. He knows the absurdity of conforming to prescribed and "externalized" truth; and, as an "individual," he, for the first time, is aware of the universe of individuals.

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An organization is concerned with the organization of behavior, and the particular organization of behavior of an organization is determined in terms of certain principles of knowledge. The validity of such principles can only be determined pragmatically. Their truth, however, if they have any relation to essential truth, can, according to the existentialist, be determined only by the individual. Any principle operating within the structure of an organization may or may not be related to truth. That is, it may or may not reflect upon the existence of individuals who are operating in accordance with it. At this point there are two things that the existentialist would note:

First, an organization functions very properly in regulating the behavior or an individual in accordance with those principles that have no relation to his existence. This is not to say that an organization may not properly leave the determination of many judgements to the intelligence of its members. In many respects, however, agreement to, and conformity with, certain principles of organizational behavior are demanded for the proper functioning of the organization.

Second, there is no necessary reason why organizational principles have to be grounded in, or derived from, an existential context of meaning. Logically there
exists an infinite number of possible contexts from which any such principle may derive. Hence, to assign one such context of meaning as the context from which the principle derives, and to which an individual must subscribe, is both to assign to the principle an arbitrary meaning and to compel the conformity of the individual to an existential context of meaning which properly should be determined only by himself. Also, psychologically there are an infinite number of possible contexts of meaning to which any organizational principle -- the principle defined pragmatically or operationally -- may point. Adherence to military principles, for example, may point most significantly to a religious context of meaning for some, while others may perceive their most critical significance more in the direction of political or social meaning. To assign a particular significance to such principles, then, is again arbitrary and results in the suppression of the individual.

The justification of an organization rests on the recognition that joint activity is more effective in attaining certain results than is individual activity. It requires that people cooperate or behave in certain pre-established ways. The existentialist is saying, then, that an individual, as he shares in the responsibility of achieving the results, should properly conform to those
principles inherent within the organization that tend most effectively to achieve such results, and that have no relation to his existence. The propriety of conforming to those principles that do have a relation to the existence of the individual, or that are perceived by the individual as having such a relation, however, can be determined only by the individual.

The ideal would be that an individual could align himself with those organizations that either had no relation to his existence, or that were in accordance with his existence. In modern society, however, this is impossible. Complete freedom of selection by an individual does not exist. Or, for that matter, in many cases there is no freedom for the individual to select the organization in which he must operate. That is, the individual is within a life situation that requires the compromise of his existence. And the degree to which he will compromise can be determined only by the individual.

Principles operating within the structure of an organization that have a very critical relation to the existence of people should therefore be kept at a minimum. Education, for example, must function as an organization. It does not follow from this, however, that it is thereby necessary to repress the existence of its members into a harmonious organizational whole. The Harvard Report
stated the ideal of school organization as, "cooperation on the level of action irrespective of agreement on ultimates." In addition to this, however, it might have noted that in many cases the effectiveness of an organization would in no way be impaired by the exclusion of agreements on principles at the level of action, principles which nevertheless either derived from, or pointed to, the existence (ultimates) of individuals. Were teachers, for example, permitted the greatest possible freedom to operate out of their own genuine existence, and where this is not possible, to effect "compromise on the level of action," there is no reason to assume that the organization would not function better. People will compromise their existence. To live in the world with others, we have to.

The freedom of the individual, then, is the ultimate aim of this philosophy. This implies not only the removal of external restraints but the removal of internal restraints as well. There has been great progress in the removal of external restraints to freedom. The Church and the absolutist state, for example, no longer dominate us. We have secured freedom of speech, of the press, and of religion. Economic freedom and civil rights exist on a

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scale that in previous ages would have been unimaginable. For a time it appeared to the lovers of freedom as if rid-
ing ourselves of external domination was a sufficient condition for securing the freedom of the individual. Yet this faith has not proved out. We have freedom of speech, and our speech is determined. We have freedom of religion, and there is religious intolerance and persecution. "All men are created equal," but not equal enough to study or ride together. We have the conditions for freedom, but we have neither the capacity to be free nor the capacity to grant such freedom to others.

Education must serve to free the individual, to assist in this process of removing the internal restraints to freedom. Before there can be any hope of its serving in this capacity, however, a redefining of the meaning of the phrase, "education is a social function," will be necessary, for it is the assumption within American edu-
cation of the soundness of this idea that is more than any other single factor responsible for the existence of educational conditions that prevent the possibility of the student becoming free.

Psychologically we have a propensity to escape from freedom. Sociologically we have a propensity to help or demand of others that they escape. The combination of these two forces results in the ethical ideal of the identity of the individual and society. To become your
society, in the Hegelian sense of the word, has become the ideal. This is so to such an extent in education that even philosophy of education is defined as "the social foundations of education"; that is, as the attempt to locate and define the cultural values of our society which we must teach our students to become.

No one, except he who is fearful of being himself, would view the function of education as a process of conforming to the patterns of society. If democracy became a system to which the character of its people is expected to conform, freedom is lost. "The victory of freedom is possible only if democracy develops into a society in which . . . the individual is not subordinated to or manipulated by any power outside himself."¹ And yet, this is what one of our most influential educators has to say on this subject: "To share in what seems the supremely important things going on in common life . . . to feel the approval of others . . . these are the social processes that result in the learner's acceptance of group ways and standards as his ways and his standards."²

¹Fromm, op. cit., p. 271.

The future of democracy depends on the realization of individualism, but an individualism of a certain nature, and not that which is characteristic of modern democracies. Democracy can be successful only if it reaches the point of development where the genuine individuals are the determining factors in the development of the culture. Otherwise it cannot be distinguished from fascism in the sense that both are characterized by the individual's submission to an external authority.

In this respect, Jaspers' appraisal of our American society is this: "What the bolsheviks and fascists do, .... and what we learn of the decline of liberty in the United States, differ in respect of many points of detail--but, common to them all, is that human beings are turned out according to standardized types."¹ And to the degree that Jaspers is correct, and there is no doubt that he is correct to a degree, to that degree has democracy slipped away from us. To regain it, however, cannot be accomplished as long as the ideal of conformity itself is the ideal of society and the ideal of its educational system.

Education and Self-Realization

"What is education? I should suppose that education was the curriculum one had to run through in order to catch up with oneself, and he who will not pass through this curriculum is helped very little by the fact that he was born in the most enlightened age."

For Kierkegaard the ultimate goal of education is the self-realization of the student. And by self-realization he means the development of the capacity of the student to appropriate a level of knowledge transcending his socially or culturally defined self. All cultures conceive the ideals of their "patterns" as constituting the "most enlightened age," but for Kierkegaard, to transform a student into these is to transform him into an arbitrary and meaningless thing, a thing which, if it had any relationship to essential truth, would be purely accidental; a thing which, if it corresponds to truth, the individual himself has not determined and has no way of knowing. Students today, for example, are transformed into Christians

or Jews, Catholics or Protestants, the American or the Communist, the Republican or the Democrat, the soldier or the pacifist, but they themselves have not determined what they are. Or perhaps the universal correspondence of the "products" to their particular social environments in these instances is purely coincidental.

As Professor Fallico notes, educators are all too willing to provide the student "with ready-made formulas for individual human existence. In so far as they stand armed with 'natures,' 'essences,' and authoritative descriptions of man, of his happiness, of society, and everything else under the sun, they betray a hidden intent to reduce man to a thing, an object which may suffer but never freely initiate change on his own."

For the existentialist, then, education is successful only when the student reaches the stage of development in which he becomes capable of determining for himself what he is. To interfere with his capacity to do this is to negate the moral principle not only of education, but of life itself. In this respect, Kierkegaard said that Socrates had represented the essential principle of teaching when he said: "The god compels me to act as a midwife, 

but has never allowed me to beget."1 "Begetting belongs to God alone."2

Emerson also voiced this ideal of education: "It is not for you to choose what he shall know, what he shall do.... He only holds the key to his own secret."3 Also, however, Emerson noted the major temptation of the teacher: "You are trying to make that man another you. One's enough!"4 And it is true that this has and continues to constitute one of the major temptations of the teacher, the temptation of denying the student the opportunity of self-determination. For the most part the current emphasis on guidance and "meeting the needs of the youth" serves this function. This is somewhat concealed by such utterances as "to teach students to make intelligent decisions," but always somewhere in the background is a referent for this: "Consistent with the ideals of our culture," or "the characteristics of democratic living at its best."


4Ibid., p. 256.
"The ideals" and "the characteristics" here indicate only the interpretations of some educator concerning what is best for the student to become. Education, then, as Alberty rightfully perceives,\(^1\) becomes synonymous with guidance: the guidance of the student into that which it has been determined he shall become.

For Kierkegaard self-determination signifies the essential creative capacity of the individual. That is, there is within each individual the capacity to perceive meaning beyond that which potentially inheres within his mind, or which is derivable from his mind. The mind, in other words, is capable of reaching a stage of "tension" out of which there bursts forth a new mind. It is this rebirth of mind, then, into a higher level of awareness that signifies the transformation of the person into the individual. "And from becoming an individual, no one, no one at all, is excluded, except he who excludes himself by becoming a crowd."\(^2\) This process, however, can be realized only by and within the subjectivity of each individual. In this respect the teacher must become a vanishing point at those

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critical stages of the educational process that have to do with the appropriation of essential truth. "The mission of the teacher ends with his efforts to help another human to want desperately to be himself."¹

The "I-Thou" relationship for Martin Buber indicates essentially the same quality of experience which Kierkegaard depicts. To treat a fellow man in order to gain status, money, power, friendship, etc., is to establish an "I-It" relation. Other men have "a different perception of the world, a different recognition and order of meaning, a different touch from the regions of existence, a different faith, a different soil." "To recognize and affirm these differences in the presence of conflict," without relaxing the seriousness of the conflict, is the way we can in "moments" of "Thou-ness" touch on the "truth" or "justice" of the other.²

From this it is apparent that for Buber the presence of another in "an act of inclusion" does not preclude the possibility of the "Thou" experience. In this respect, he criticizes Kierkegaard for withdrawing the "I-Thou" relationship from the world of reality; that is, as being "immediately" possible as the individual is "face to face"

¹Fallico, op. cit., p. 171.

with an existing situation.\(^1\) This is precisely how Kierkegaard saw it, however. "Thou" is defined exclusively by Kierkegaard in terms of the self's relation to itself, in terms of the absolute withdrawal of the individual into his own subjectivity. This, Buber says, results in the ethics of "inner-worldly 'monastery.'"\(^2\) This criticism, however, probably reflects only a difference in the two men's opinions as to the potentialities of the "crowd," or the "herd" as Kierkegaard was more inclined to say, a term which indicates the strength of his opinion, for negating the individual's development as an individual. Kierkegaard was too afraid of the corruptibility of the visible forms which the I-Thou relationship would assume at the level of Buber's "Community" or "body politic."

In this disagreement there is much evidence to indicate that Kierkegaard was more nearly correct. Recent social analyses, such as Packard's The Hidden Persuaders and Riesman's The Lonely Crowd, and psychological experiments,\(^3\) indicate that the group has an almost irresistible influence upon the individual, an influence which results in the loss of his capacity to be or to become himself.

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 50-65.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 54.

Within a group to some degree the individual is caught up and determined by it. In this sense, those impressed with the potentialities of group dynamics are correct. The group does acquire a dynamics of its own, a psychology of its own which catches up the individual psychologies of its members and assimilates them within it. This has long been recognized in mob psychology, and to the degree that the group serves the same function, group psychology is only a lesser degree of mob psychology.

There can be no doubt that with adolescents the group constitutes an important source that accounts for the repression of their individuality. Harold Hand notes that "because their peer culture is supremely important to them, adolescents are particularly susceptible to group commitments... Control is inherent in group-centered activity; to 'get out of line,' as pupils themselves might say, is to flout the will of the group, to risk being a nobody or a 'square,' something which normal adolescents are not likely to do."¹ Unlike this author, however, and other educators who advocate the use of the group as a methodological device for controlling and molding the individual, the existentialist would say that this tendency of the group to determine the individual needs to be

counteracted. This contention is supported by recent sociological analyses. For example Whyte cites a most interesting example of the use of the group as a "disciplining" influence on the individual.

The conference leader's remedy. Place Donald Duck at your left (the blind spot). Fail to hear his objections, or if you do, misunderstand them. If possible, recognize a legitimate objection and side with him. Object is to get him to feel that he 'belongs'. If he still persists in running wild, let group do what they are probably by now quite hot to do, i.e., cut the lug down. They generally do it by asking Little Brother Terrible to clarify his position, then to clarify his clarification, then to clarify his clarification of his clarification, etc., until our lad is so hot and bothered that he has worked himself into role of conference comedian. Then soothe his bruised ego and restore him to human society by asking him questions that he can answer out of special experience.\(^1\)

"It will be said by the man of bustle, sociability, and amicableness, 'How unreasonable that only one attains the goal; for it is far more likely that many, by the strength of united effort, should attain the goal; and when we are many, success is more certain and it is easier for each man severally.'\(^2\) This statement by Kierkegaard is a reasonably accurate paraphrase of those sections found in most introduction to education books, educational methods books, and elementary and secondary school curriculum books that deal with the function of the

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\(^2\)Kierkegaard, *Point of View*, p. 133.
group in education. The use of the group as a teaching method, however, assumes that the problems of concern are susceptible to objective analysis and objective resolution. If the problems of group concern are of this nature, that is, if they are problems "that have no relation to existence," then they can very well be resolved by a group. If they contain elements requiring the subjective evaluation of the student, however, then no other individual can determine or judge the solution of the problem for the individual. In this sense, then, the influence of the group upon the individual student must be curtailed, not encouraged.

In stressing this feature of existentialism, however, "this injunction to keep hands off the self-project of a person must not be confused with the silly clap-trap of so-called progressivism--with its disguised notion of inevitable progress about to appear around the corner. Existentialist non-directive education leaves the student to his own devices only in the manner of old wise Socrates who rarely failed to incite at least rebellion against one's self, against one's own moral and intellectual unconsciousness. Though not predetermining the values by which a man will want to live, this kind of non-directive
education would attack all intentional ignorance with every wily device it can summon to its aid.¹

Another major fallacy of education, in addition to its emphasis on the group, has been its assumption that the self-development of the student is consistent with his intellectual development. For Kierkegaard, however, development is not finally to be realized through the process of intellectualizing life, for truth resides in the self and not in the mind's knowledge of its world.

The intellect is incapable of providing essential meaning for a person's life. The assumption that it does constitute the error of many modern critics of education who rightfully complain of the tendency of current educational practice to further the destruction of the individual. The assumption of such men as David Riesman, William Whyte, Jr., and Paul Woodring is that the way to escape this deadening influence is for schools to develop the "inner directed" intellectual, and that "a rigorous fundamental schooling" will accomplish this. Educational fulfillment conceived in this way, as intellectual development, results, according to existentialism, in a serious error. It results in the misdirection of the students' attention. In accordance with this conception of education

¹Pallico, op. cit., p. 172.
the student's attention is directed exclusively to that which is external to himself, and he assumes that he is to discover his meaning within this context.

The disciple, he who accepts the thought product of another mind as the definition of himself, is recognized as an example of miseducation. He is recognized for what he is: an individual who escapes from the responsibility of self-determination. No mind has had the same experience, quantitatively or qualitatively, as another mind. Hence, the thought product of each mind must necessarily be a unique and individual affair, and no mind has the right to escape to the product of another mind.

Why, however, should the disciple be defined as one who escapes to the product of another mind? As Plato demonstrated in the Republic, there can be no doubt of the superiority of some minds to others. This is evident, and it is evident to both the mind which is superior and the mind which is inferior. In this sense, the existentialist asks, why is it any better to be a disciple to the product of your own mind than to the product of another mind? You are just as much a disciple—and an inferior disciple at that, for surely it would be possible for you to locate and recognize a superior mind somewhere.

The objection to the disciple here is not merely to one who accepts the thought product of another as the determinant of his self, but to the idea that the thought
product of any mind can be used to determine the self. Thought products, regardless of their source, are merely "interesting possibilities" having no necessary meaning whatsoever for determining the course of the individual's existence. The individual could in a moment, as Dewey's "thinking process" clearly demonstrates, "reconstruct or reorganize" his thought and the entire meaning of his life becomes something different.

Kierkegaard's contention, on the other hand, that all essential truth is subjective, and that objective knowledge is un-truth, has led to many misconceptions concerning his view of the function of objective, intellectual knowledge. Marjorie Grene states that Kierkegaard "rejected all abstraction, logic, and all consistency, generality, and objectivity."¹ Kaufman, a critic of Kierkegaard, although agreeing that "reason alone, to be sure, cannot solve some of life's most central problems," asks, however, "Does it follow that passion can, or that reason ought to be abandoned altogether?"²

Such criticisms are difficult to understand in as much as Kierkegaard explicitly noted that he was rejecting


abstract thought only as it was considered equivalent to Hegel's "pure thought as pure being."\(^1\) His contention that objective thought is indifferent toward existence indicates only a confession of its limitations, and not its wholesale rejection. In fact, his "law of the development of the self with respect to knowledge.....is this, that the increasing degree of knowledge corresponds with the degree of self-knowledge, that the more the self knows, the more it knows itself. If this does not occur, then the more knowledge increases, the more it becomes a kind of inhuman knowing for the production of which man's self is squandered."\(^2\)

Far from contending that rational, objective thought ought to be abandoned altogether, the existentialist recognizes two very legitimate functions of objective thought, one of which is necessary for attaining to the life of existence.

One function of education, probably its greatest, is concerned with man's capacity to adjust to the conditions of his environment. This involves, as Dewey so ably pointed out, not only the capacity to reconstruct continuously the intellectual processes, but also the capacity to increase

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\(^1\)Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 270.

the practical relevance or applicability of intellectual understandings for coping with "the problems of men." The careful, persistent accumulation of bodies of knowledge, chemistry, biology, physics, etc., and the systematic organization of knowledge concerning the significance of such knowledge for the problems of existence, medicine, agriculture, etc., are the two factors that have accounted for man's increased power over nature.

In this respect education is concerned both with the growth and accumulation of knowledge, and with the increased applicability of knowledge. It was Dewey's and his followers' contribution to education and to culture to develop a new conception of intelligence, a conception which promoted the awareness of this intimate relation existing between the intellectual and the practical modes of knowing.

Education's exclusive preoccupation with the intellectual had resulted in a type of education that was remote from, and unconcerned with, its meaning for life. On the other hand, undue emphasis on practical intelligence, as Dewey himself tried to point out to his followers, not only has had a stultifying effect upon the mind, but eventually terminates in the enslavement of man to his environment.

It would be impossible to overemphasize either the significance of "the Deweyian concept" of knowledge for man,
or the necessity of education to concern itself with such knowledge. The development of a student's capacity to acquire knowledge of this order, is certainly recognized by the existentialist as an important function of education, for ultimately it signifies the capacity to survive. More positively than this, however, it signifies the capacity to control rather than be controlled by one's environment, to develop an environmental relationship that is most consistent with man's conception of the good life.

In the realm of empirical inquiry, certainly the "crowd" is not un-truth. Agreement at the level of theory is not only possible but desirable. And those disciplines that have attained the highest level of development have been those that have been the most successful in formulating an effective body of knowledge. If education is to attain to the level of a discipline, it must likewise acquire a body of such knowledge.

Philosophy of education, Phenix says, "involves the organization, interpretation, clarification, and criticism of what is already within the realm of the known and the experienced."\(^1\) In this sense the existentialist is in agreement with William Stanley's contention that "many of the really pressing issues in educational theory and

practice, at least as they apply to public schools, may be adjudicated apart from a general agreement on ultimate metaphysical, epistemological, and theological questions. 1 "And, fortunately," Stanley continues, "many, although not all, educational issues fall in this realm... in which empirical inquiry and experience do count." 2

Existentialism has nothing to do with knowledge of this sort. It is with a different order of meaning that the existentialist is concerned. Man not only is concerned with the determination of an objective order of knowledge, an order of knowledge which functions in controlling his environment. He is also concerned with the determination of a normative order of knowledge, an order of knowledge which establishes the meaning of his life. It is with this latter order of meaning that Kierkegaard denies the sufficiency of intelligence. In denying its sufficiency, however, he does not deny its function in arriving at such an order of meaning. Essential truth is appropriated only through the subjective processes, and not through the process of intellectualizing the meaning of existence. Intellectualism, however, serves two functions in arriving at the truths of existence. First, it is this process of

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2 Ibid., p. 16.
reflection that terminates in the process of "infinite reflection." And it is the process of infinite reflection that provides the impulsive power for propelling man into the Absurd. This is why Nietzsche says that nihilism is the essential.

Why has the advent of nihilism become necessary? Because the values we had hitherto thus draw their final consequence; because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals -- because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these 'values' really had.¹

The second function of intellectual inquiry into the meaning of existence is as a means for increasing the degree of self-knowledge. As Kierkegaard noted, the degree of self-knowledge is dependent on the degree of knowledge, on "the wealth of finiteness."² Intellectualizing the meaning of existence, then, not only provides for the occasioning of subjectivity, but it increases the range and relevance of subjectivity. Subjective involvement is always occasioned by the individual's reflection on some aspect of his rational world, and to increase his awareness of this rational world is to increase the range and profundity of his possible existential truths. In this

¹Cited in Kaufman, op. cit., p. 110.

sense Kierkegaard agrees with Radhakrishnan that "intellectual preparation is an instrument for attaining to the truth of the spirit."\(^1\) The intellectual development of the student then becomes very important, for to increase his intellectual potentialities is to increase the possibility of his attaining an order of knowledge transcending the intellectual.

The distinctive function of subject matter for the existentialist then is to elicit an awareness within students of subjective truth, an awareness which without the consideration of the subject matter would not be available to them. In many cases before there can be the opportunity for the subjective appropriation of truth, a very complicated and technical knowledge of subject matter must first be acquired. A really "thou awareness" of the Hindu, the Jew of Israel, or the Communist peasant, for example, is available to one only after he has learned much subject matter, the subject matter of history, sociology, economics, for example, and perhaps psychology.

An excessive concentration on the student's intellectual mastery of subject matter, however, may result in "the aesthetic-intellectual intoxication,"\(^2\) in "the

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\(^1\)Whit Burnett (Ed.), *This is My Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 345.

tendency to run wild in possibility."\(^1\) The study of knowledge then is used to avoid subjective truth. "Life then resolves itself into interesting particulars...all necessity is done away with."\(^2\) This is the professional student, the student who "finds his true home in intellectualism. There he feels comfortable, for there only can he readily fulfill his task of persistently conceiving the stream of thought as something other than it is."\(^3\) For him life becomes a mammoth chess game. He can study knowledge concerning the most serious and fundamental problem of existence, "yet in such a way that this comes to pass rather in abstracto than in concreto; in such a way that this pursuit itself is little more than a mood from which nothing results but a knowledge of it."\(^4\)

Subject matter deals with the "possible," which is at once the possibility of developing the self to its utmost, and the possibility of "getting lost in possibility."\(^5\) In this respect education must maintain a balance between the

\(^1\)Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death*, p. 170.


two. Students must learn the "structure" or "form" of knowledge, even that knowledge which has a relationship to "existence," for example the knowledge of "equality." They must always be pushed beyond this, however, to where the awareness of subjective truth is available to them, for ultimately the knowledge of such concepts as equality is not something to be learned, but something to be experienced. This is one of the major tragedies of education, that thoughts which originally derived from an original contact with the "purenness of existence" then lose all contact with such a source. Then these "ennobled principles" become something which are set down in books and learned by rote. They become meaningless and arbitrary normative principles, but not meaningless in the sense that they cannot be viciously instituted to effect man's immorality.

The subject matter of education should be selected for its potentiality for promoting both the imaginative consideration of "objects" and "events," and the student's infinite reflection (wonder) upon or concerning such "objects" and "events." For it is out of this process that reflection reverses itself into the "moments" of subjective awareness.

There are two ways in which this may be accomplished: first, through the selection of subject matter that contains a diversity of given "reactions" to its existential
meaning. In this sense, were teachers to operate more as librarians commonly do, perhaps the self-determination of the student would be a more frequent result. The librarian directs students into that which effects their "involvement," but then she keeps out of their way. Children will demand of the teacher what their "reaction" should be. And this is the greatest temptation of the teacher...to comply. A librarian, however, often only refers them. And then, if students discuss with her, she will refer them again. The effect is, as a teacher she makes it extremely difficult for the student to grasp onto and rely upon a formulated "reaction." In effect, she carries on naturally, as the student is ready for each step in the process, the process of infinite reflection, the process out of which there emerges the possibility of the subjective perception of truth.

There is no substitute for self-search in the education of man. And no man can help another in these fundamental matters except by denying him palliatives and expedient ways of avoiding the genuine encounter with nothingness which is existence itself. The teacher is the rare person who knows how to withhold and to expose the obnoxious medicaments, and knows also how to stand out of the way of a healthy existential crisis.¹

The second way in which subject matter may function in this "reflective process" is through the selection of subject matter in which there is no "third person." The

¹Fallico, op. cit., p. 171.
meaning of this term is developed by Rilke in a commentary on his own writings in *The Notes of Malte Laurids Brigge*.

How wrong I was when I wrote my drama. Was I an ape and a fool that I required a third person to tell of the fate of two human beings who made things hard for one another? How readily I fell into this trap. And I certainly should have known that this third person who appears in every life and literature, this ghost of a third person who never existed, has no significance and must be denied. He is one of the pretexts of nature who is always intent on diverting men's attention from her deepest mysteries. He is the screen behind which a drama takes place. He is the noise at the entrance to the voiceless silence of a real conflict. Perhaps everybody has found it too difficult to speak of the two who matter; the third person, precisely because he is so unreal, represents an easy task; everybody knows how to cope with him. From the beginning of these dramas one can notice their impatience to get to the third person; they can hardly wait for him. As soon as he appears, all is well. But how dull things are if he is late; nothing can really happen without him: everything stands, freezes, waits.¹

The third person here is he who saves the reader from the necessity of self-decision and self-responsibility. He is "the System" personified. The third person is he, who in *The Caine Mutiny* steps in at the last moment and decides for us that it would have been better for hundreds of men to perish rather than to question the authority of the system, though the system is represented by a psychopath. The third person is the author of our educational text book who decided for our students of education the

proper (i.e., "progressive") and improper (i.e., "traditional") important and unimportant "reactions" to complex educational principles and ideals, principles and ideals which are loaded with existential referents, and which should be decided only within the existence of the individual student. Or, for that matter, the third person is he who, as the pervading parochial atmosphere in many departments of graduate schools and universities turns students out according to standardized types.

In the Unscientific Postscript Kierkegaard developed essentially the same idea as is involved in Rilke's "third person." And in conjunction with this Kierkegaard then developed the concept of indirect communication, which is the principle "that the secret of all communication consists precisely in emancipating the recipient, and that for this reason he (the teacher) must not communicate himself directly; aye, that it is even irreligious to do so."

Subjective truth represents the individual's unique complicity with God, and for another to communicate such knowledge directly to him is to short circuit the appropriation process and deprive the individual of the opportunity of determining his own God-relationship. "The inwardness of the understanding would consist precisely in each individual coming to understand it by himself."

1 Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p.69.
2 Ibid., p. 71.
Indirect communication was the form of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings. In these he considered himself a teacher, writing to certain types of people to help them become subjective. In this respect Kierkegaard stated an important principle of teaching. The teacher will, he noted, "from the beginning have his attention called to the requirement that this form should embody artistically as much of reflection as he himself has when existing in his thought. In an artistic manner, please note; for the secret does not lie in a direct assertion.... Such a direct expression of it is precisely a contradiction."¹ This principle demands for its realization the teacher as an artist—the teacher capable of transforming a situation into an existential situation, for "artistry would always demand a reflection within the recipient."²

Subject matter, then, must be presented, and conditions arranged, artistically, that is, in such a way that it creates within the student a mood of "subjective—involvement," the mood which is a necessary prerequisite from his derivation of the truths of inwardness.

From the point of view presented in the Postscript "every individual is in essence equally adapted for eternity and essentially related to the eternal."³ The

¹Ibid., pp. 68-69.
²Ibid., p. 70.
³Ibid., p. 505.
teacher's task is to provide "an occasion" for putting the student in contact with inwardness. There is no assumption, however, that the object of appropriation is to be provided.

In the later stages of Kierkegaard's thought, however, he developed the idea that truth "lies in a revelation which must be proclaimed."\(^1\) Here truth is not considered to be uniquely relative to the subjectivity of each individual. It is, rather, a "reality" external to the individual.

This latter principle Kierkegaard called "reduplication," the principle that the individual was related to truth which then could be reduplicated in one who was not related. Within this framework the inducement of subjectivity does not guarantee that the truth will be appropriated. Hence, ultimately the teacher must become "a witness."\(^2\) As a "witness," however, he represents an order of truth which can only be existentially (i.e., subjectively) acquired or communicated.

Subject matter at this stage must do more than create a mood of subjective involvement within the recipient. It must do this, but in addition it must convey the "object" to be appropriated. The teacher at this further

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\(^2\) Ibid.
stage of artistry is dealing with meaning which cannot be
identified with its "form" or "structure." He is dealing
with meaning the qualities of which are significant only
"in their immediate presence,"1 qualities which, however,
are "embodied" within a "structure."2 And the "structure"
without the "embodiment" represents no essential meaning.

1Art As Experience (New York: Minton, Balch and
Company, 1934), p. 74. By resorting to this reference to
Dewey there is not the intention of identifying Dewey's
conception of art with Kierkegaard's. There are, however,
interesting similarities which are often overlooked.
Those who have analyzed and explained Dewey's philosophy
have in practically all instances done so only in terms
of its empirical and intellectual characteristics. Harold
Rugg is an exception to this in that he at least noted
the presence of the subjective and intuitive. Of course,
for Dewey there was the assumption of the "synthesiz-
ability" of the "immediate apprehension of meaning"
(artistic meaning) with its intellectual-empirical
representation, the assumption that there was no necessary
contradiction between the two realms. Furthermore, it was
his assumption that artistic meaning has only the status
of "emotionalized thinking" (p. 73) which must be capable
of being transformed into an intellectual hypothesis
capable of being empirically verified. In this sense
artistic meaning represented for Dewey a lower or more
primitive form of meaning than that which it was capable
of becoming. This, Kierkegaard would say, represents
Dewey's, as indeed it did Hegel's "fallacy of conversion";
a fallacy they were led into by the original fallacy of
converting being into thought, the conversion of the
original subjective insights into, for Dewey, their intel-
lectual-empirical representations. This of course marks
a radically different conception of thought than the
rationalism of Hegel, but Dewey did make the same "lunatic
postulate."

2Cf. Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald G.
The content of teaching then represents the particulars which the teacher must mold into an artistic structure that will induce an awareness of meaning. Teaching as it fulfills this function becomes a creative art. And in those areas where it is an art, method cannot be prescribed anymore than it can for the artist. The teacher must, in terms of the quality of his relationship with the student—i.e., in terms of his particular effect as a person on the student, relate himself with his subject matter to the student in such a way as to create an effect.

Philosophies are potential "artistic structures." They are instruments, but not in the sense that Dewey had in mind. Rather, they are creative constructs, not for depicting but for eliciting. If there does not occur an awareness of something beyond the system itself, then the student of philosophy may as well have busied himself with the mastery of non-sense syllables. If there occurs an insight into the truth underlying the philosopher's system, however, then, in a sense, his system becomes insignificant. The student may carry on the philosophical game of intellectual refutation, but it is only half-hearted. His judgment is changed. He may "know" the system is inadequate and even false, but at the same time that the philosopher speaks truth.
The error of education, the existentialist maintains, has been its concentration on the structure of knowledge, assuming that this is where truth lies; and that when students have mastered the "form" they have learned truth. Philosophy of education is itself guilty of this. Whether the "form" is a philosophical one, or a particular social theory, there is too often the tendency, not only to require its mastery, but to enforce a particular dogma upon the students of education. To do this is to subvert philosophy of education from a moral undertaking into its opposite.

It was acknowledged above that there is a definite need for organizing and developing a body of effective knowledge in the field of education. This is necessary if educators are to know what they are doing, and if they are to formulate better ways of doing what they intend. Certainly philosophy of education, if its members have any special capacity in this area, could by assuming this role make valuable contributions to the development of the field.

Over and above this, however, philosophy of education must provide the source from which can be drawn that which will provide for its own creative development. The accumulation and organization of knowledge within a defined life--structure, a structure that is itself responsible
for the suppression of the human spirit, accomplishes less than nothing. It becomes just that much more effective, but negatively effective.

In education, as in all areas of life, there arises the need to escape from the suppression of self-evidence, from the necessity of the "is." Kierkegaard, as he was centrally concerned with this problem, joins with the tradition of educational reformers in their efforts to liberate the mind of man.
Conclusion

In the final analysis it is the meaning of the term "knowledge" that is the critical point of distinction between Kierkegaard's philosophy and others that are operative within modern philosophy of education. If it is denied that intelligence is capable of plotting the normative course of human existence, then it appears that at present there are two possible alternatives at hand--the existentialist's or the logical positivist's. If normative judgments cannot be intellectually determined, then either the positivist is correct in declaring them merely emotive and, therefore, meaningless; or there is an existential mode for determining the certainty of such beliefs.

The existential mode itself, however, cannot be demonstrated; rather, according to its own standards, it can only be "appropriated" as an awareness within the depths of the individual's subjectivity. Probably none will deny the sincerity of the existentialist here, that his experience of certainty at the level of "thou-ness" is a personal awareness of genuine authenticity. But perhaps his awareness is a delusion. Martin Buber says,
"There is no certainty. There is only chance; but there is no other. The risk does not insure the truth for us; but it, and it alone, leads us to where the breath of truth is felt."¹

Buber's willingness to risk the "chance" is to be admired. But this does not eliminate the problem. It remains possible that this awareness of "subjective certainty" is as meaningless as is the "objective certainty" that the existentialists have so ably devoted their efforts to demonstrating. Even at the place "where the breath of truth is felt," there is no guarantee that this does in fact constitute the attainment of the truth of "transcendence." Even granting the experience, and the personal conviction of authenticity which it carries, there is still no guarantee that one at this point is not standing in the realm of "Nothingness" between the finite nothingness and the Infinite, which itself may be a nothingness. If the existentialist's contention that rationality is incapable of determining ethical existence is to be assumed, then one is still faced with the predicament of entertaining the notion that man's entire endeavor of determining the meaning of existence is absurd.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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